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Iraqi assembly meets despite mortar shells

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An Iraqi soldier is helped by U.S. troops from Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion, after a car bomb exploded Wednesday in Baqouba, Iraq. Four Iraqi soldiers were killed.

CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Bomber targets Iraqi troops near U.S. bases in Baqouba

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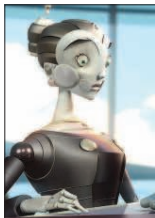
**Judas Priest
is back with a
metal mouthful
for U.S. troops**

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Rob Halford

STARS & STRIPES

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'Robots' offers more
than canned laughs

Scene on Sunday

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Fla. right-to-die case: The husband of a brain-damaged woman accused Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and state legislators of pandering to voters by trying to pass legislation preventing the removal of her feeding tube.

Michael Schiavo leveled the accusations Tuesday in an interview for ABC's "Nightline" after state House and Senate committees endorsed bills aimed at preventing removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube. A judge has scheduled the removal for Friday.

Pinochet banking help: Not just Riggs Bank, but eight others — including Citigroup and Bank of America — helped former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and members of his family build a secret network of accounts to conceal his wealth, Senate investigators have found.

In a report released Tuesday, the investigators charged that Riggs's dealings with Pinochet were far more extensive and long-standing than had been known.

Pinochet

University of Colo. grants: A philanthropic organization that donated the University of Colorado nearly \$2 million in the past three years has delayed fulfilling grant requests this year, in part because of the school's recent scandals, the organization's president said.

Some board members were concerned about problems facing the university, including the investigation of a professor who confessed some Sept. 11, 2001, victims to a Nazi, the football recruiting scandal and questions about the finances of the university's fund-raising arm. Others wanted to look at the success of previous grants.

World

Madrid train bombing: Lawmakers probing the Madrid, Spain, train bombing on Wednesday rejected a request to hear more testimony and instead set an April 19 deadline for draft proposals that would be included in a final report on Spain's worst terrorist attack.

The conservative Popular Party, which was in power at the time of the attack March 11, 2004, has been pressing for the 16-member panel to hear from more police and other witnesses, but the panel said no on Wednesday.

Oil production: Driven by fears of a winter supply crunch at year's end, OPEC oil ministers agreed Wednesday to immediately authorize the pumping of an extra half-million barrels of oil a day and to approve a similar boost later if prices do not fall.

The decision to look to winter and raise the OPEC production quota just ahead of the northern hemisphere springtime — when demand normally falls — was unusual. It reflected concern about OPEC's ability



Israel protester lawsuit: Rachel Corrie, left, 23, from Olympia, Wash., uses a loudspeaker as she stands between an Israeli bulldozer and a Palestinian physician's house in the Gaza Strip town of Rafah on March 16, 2003. The parents of Corrie, who was killed while trying to prevent the demolition of the Palestinian home, is suing Caterpillar Inc., the company that made the bulldozer. The federal lawsuit, which was filed Tuesday, alleges that Caterpillar violated international and state law by providing specially designed bulldozers to Israeli Defense Forces that it knew would be used to demolish homes and endanger people.

to influence a stubbornly bullish market that has driven prices of benchmark light crude up about 25 percent this year alone.

Kyrgyzstan elections: The U.S. ambassador to Kyrgyzstan criticized the ex-Soviet republic's soldiers on Wednesday for failing to ensure free elections, and opposition supporters continued to rally across the country against alleged voting fraud.

Ambassador Stephen Young said Sunday's runoff parliamentary elections and the original vote on Feb. 27 were marred by harassment of independent media, government interference in the campaign process, media bias in favor of pro-government candidates and the disqualification of opposition candidates.

U.N. sex abuse claims: As the United Nations confronts claims of sex abuse on peacekeeping missions worldwide, officials say punishing soldiers may be easier than punishing civilians working for the world body.

Under current rules, soldiers accused of wrongdoing are sent home and punishment is left to their own governments who often do nothing, while civilians in similar circumstances can be sent home or face U.N. disciplinary action.

While much of the effort to stop sexual misconduct has focused on new policies for the 60,000 peacekeeping troops in 16 missions across the globe, United Nations deployments also have about 10,000 foreign civilians and civilian police who fall outside military rules.

Pakistan rape: Pakistan authorities said on Wednesday that they have posted more than two dozen police officers outside a woman's home to guard her after a court freed four of the six men convicted of raping her — an attack ordered by a village council as punishment for her brother's alleged misdeeds.

The four men walked out of a high-security jail nearly three years after being convicted

of raping 33-year-old Mukhtar Mai. The four men have been told "to stay away from Mukhtar Mai's house," Iqbal said.

Pope's health: Pope John Paul II made a surprise appearance Wednesday at an open window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter's Square in Vatican City, his first in public since being released from the hospital after throat surgery to ease a breathing crisis.

The 84-year-old pontiff appeared briefly to pilgrims who had gathered on the square on a day when the pope typically greets the faithful in a weekly public audience. He waved and made the sign of the cross, blessing several thousand pilgrims on the square on a mild March day.

He lingered just a minute at the window and did not address the crowd, which cheered as John Paul came into view.

Secret listening device: A U.N. watchdog has launched an investigation into the discovery of a secret listening device at the global body's European headquarters, a senior official said Tuesday.

The listening device was found last year during renovation work in a room known as the Salon Francis where it could have been used to eavesdrop on private conversations.

Afghan airliner recovery: An Afghan soldier was killed and another wounded when they triggered a land mine while recovering bodies from an airliner that slammed into a mountain in the nation's worst-ever air crash, officials said Wednesday.

Deep snow and fear of old ordnance has hampered efforts to retrieve the remains of the 105 killed when the Boeing 737 crashed east of the capital, Kabul, during a snowstorm near an old military observation post. The mine exploded on Tuesday about 400 yards from a landing zone that had earlier been checked by a de-mining team, NATO's security force in Afghanistan said.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Correction

The headline on the story Wednesday about the use of gas coupons in the United Kingdom was incorrect. The 3rd Air Force is monitoring use of the coupons.

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\$52M Livorno construction now under way

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

The Army Materiel Command Field Support Brigade-Europe broke ground on a \$52 million project Tuesday to modernize its facilities at the Leghorn Army Depot in Livorno, Italy.

When complete, the upgrade will improve the delivery of combat-ready equipment and material to troops in the field, officials said.

"Our focus for the past few years has been on providing support directly to combatant forces, and not purely to pre-positioned stocks," brigade spokesman Charles Fick said.

"The equipment we work on is coming from the fighting forces that have been in combat for the last year or more, and the renovations and repairs are extensive. It's not just a Jiffy Lube and tune-up."

The facilities at the depot date to the 1950s. When finished in 2007, there will be new workshops that can repair everything from tracked or wheeled vehicles to generators, water purification

units and bulldozers, Fick said, citing a few examples of the brigade's capabilities.

Field Support Brigade-Livorno also will have seven new humidity-controlled warehouses, 10 renovated warehouses, new administrative space and improved infrastructure such as roadways, Fick said.

"New facilities will enable us to accomplish our Army pre-positioned stocks and reset work more efficiently and safely," Norman Jasper, FSB-LI civilian executive assistant, said in a statement.

For example, Livorno's current facility has no overhead lift, "which makes removing engines more cumbersome and time-consuming," Fick said.

The command's 1,600 civilian and military personnel are stationed in Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, and are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Navy engineers will oversee the project because the U.S. Navy holds oversight authority for military construction in Italy.

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C.W. FICK JR./Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Officials gather for a ceremony Tuesday marking the start of a \$52 million construction project for Field Support Brigade-Livorno, Italy. The project will result in new workshops for tracked and wheeled vehicles and new office space.

Hospital ship leaves Aceh province



PAUL G. SCHERMAN/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The hospital ship USNS Mercy awaits port services in January after arriving in Singapore to take on supplies and personnel. The ship left Indonesia's devastated Aceh province Wednesday, ending the U.S. military's tsunami relief in the area. The ship planned to stop in eastern Indonesia to treat patients there on its way home, the U.S. embassy said. The disaster killed or left missing more than 200,000 people in Aceh province.

Rota wins housing award again

Naval Station Rota, Spain, was recently awarded the 2004 Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Award for excellence in bachelor housing.

Rota was one of only 22 commands Navy-wide, and the only command in Europe, to receive the award.

The award recognizes what would be considered the equivalent of five-star commercial lodging through a formal accreditation process.

To be eligible for the award, the bachelor housing units were inspected and had to meet five-star levels in each of the accreditation areas. This is the second year in a row that Rota has won.

From staff reports

Rear Adm. Preston appointed as Navy Region Europe commander

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Rear Adm. Noel Preston has been appointed commander, Navy Region Europe, by the chief of naval operations in the latest reshuffling of naval leaders in Europe.

Along with that appointment, made by Adm. Vern Clark, Preston will assume the NATO job of commander, Maritime Air Forces, Mediterranean, according to a Navy announcement.

He was appointed in September 2004 to his current job of director of Navy Europe Programs, Resources and Support.

Preston will replace Rear Adm. Stanley Bozin, who will transfer to the Pentagon to be director of the Navy's Office of Budget.

No date has been set for the change of command in Naples, but officials are planning a late-spring ceremony, said spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Lisa

Braun.

Replacing Preston will be Rear Adm. Derwood Curtis, currently special assistant to commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet in San Diego.

Preston graduated from the University of South Carolina Navy ROTC program in 1970 and attended the Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I. He then reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., and was designated a naval aviator in October 1971, according to his online biography.

"I am honored to have been selected as the next commander of



Preston

Navy Region Europe, and I look forward to continuing the terrific work Rear Adm. Stan Bozin has done in transforming the region for the challenges of the future," Preston said in a statement released Wednesday.

Curtis graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1976 and received a bachelor's degree in political science. He currently also serves as commander, Carrier Strike Group Eleven, USS Nimitz Strike Group.

The appointments do not require hearings before the U.S. Senate.

The Navy has yet to announce who will be tapped for the top Navy post in Europe. On March 2, the White House nominated Adm. Michael Mullen to replace the retiring Clark as chief of naval operations.

The Senate has yet to schedule Mullen's confirmation hearing.

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Airman discharged in drug case

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — A 31st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron senior airman was fined \$5,000 and reduced in rank after pleading guilty to several drug charges at a court-martial last week, a base spokesman said.

James C. Imler pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess and/or use marijuana, wrongful use of marijuana and psilocybin and possession of 8 grams of psilocybin, a hallucinogenic chemical found in some mushrooms.

The Air Force declined to release Imler's age.

Charges of possession of marijuana, hashish and seeds containing tetrahydrocannabinol were dismissed before the hearing, according to 2nd Lt. Lea Ann Chambers, a base spokeswoman.

Imler was arrested June 19 in Germany with another servicemember, Senior Airman Mohammad Odattala, who was sentenced to 10 months' confinement, fined \$8,230, reduced in rank to E-1 and given a bad-conduct discharge after pleading guilty to various drug charges last month.

Imler was reduced to E-1 and given a bad-conduct discharge.

From staff reports

U.S. peace holds in U.S.-patrolled sector

BY BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

Kosovar civilians in the American-patrolled sector of the province have so far heeded calls for calm in response to a pair of shake-ups at the top of their interim government, the new U.S. commander in the area said Tuesday.

The resignation of Kosovo's prime minister and an attack on the president over the past week have not outwardly disrupted the tenuous peace in the U.S. portion of the beleaguered Balkan region, said Brig. Gen. William Wade, commander of Multinational Brigade East.

"Things remain very calm throughout [the area of operations]," Wade said in a telephone interview. "At this point, all the people of Kosovo seem to be behaving themselves very well."

Wade took command of the U.S. portion of the NATO peace-keeping operation two days before events began to unfold in Kosovo on March 8, when then-Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj stepped down from his post after being indicted by a U.S. tribunal on 37 counts of alleged war crimes. On March 15, Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova escaped unscathed from a bombing targeting his vehicle in the provincial capital of Pristina.

The events triggered repeated calls for composure by U.N. and Kosovo Force officials.

"I appeal ... to the people of Kosovo to express your feelings through peaceful means. A violent response will not help Kosovo," the U.S.'s top envoy to the region, Soren Jessen-Petersen, said

in a statement released March 8. "It is important that we all remain calm and dignified during these difficult days."

Wade said the National Guardsmen under his command came to Kosovo prepared to start their mission in a time of potential unrest. March 18 marks the one-year anniversary of the last major outbreak of ethnic violence between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the area. About 2,000 U.S. troops are serving in Kosovo.

NATO forces have been in place in the province since 1999, following a bombing campaign to push former Yugoslavian leader Slobodan Milosevic's forces out of the region.

The 18,000-soldier peacekeeping force received a timely boost in troop numbers just before Haradinaj's resignation last week. On March 6, a battalion of British troops was added to join a German armored battalion in a previously planned training exercise called Operation Determined Effort 2005, KFOR public information officer Leroy Guillaume said.

Bad weather in Kosovo and lessons learned from the 2004 training regimen, "showed that we need a plan to be ready to face any contingency," Guillaume said. The reason for the last-minute troop addition in an e-mail to Stars and Stripes.

Wade said he didn't think ethnic tensions in MNB (East) would increase as events continued to unfold in Kosovo's new government.

"I don't expect an escalation, given what we've seen," he said.

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Officials from Serbian, Albanian resume talks on missing people

BY KATARINA KRATOVAC

The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro — Serbian and ethnic Albanian officials resumed talks Wednesday, after a year's break, aiming to discover the fate of thousands of people still missing from the 1998-99 Kosovo war.

The issue remains one of the most sensitive facing the former foes.

Wednesday's meeting in Belgrade — under the auspices of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross — is also a step in the process to resolving the future status of the U.N.-run province.

"We can be satisfied if the issue of the missing is taken seriously, so that it can be part of a wider dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade," said Francois Stamm, the ICRC official who chaired the talks.

Kosovo's U.N. administrator, Soren Jessen-Petersen, welcomed the resumption of talks between the two sides, urging them to act in a "constructive manner and in a way that focuses fully on the humanitarian perspective."

Contacts between ethnic Albanian leaders and Belgrade officials have been rare since the war, which ended after NATO's 1999 bombing campaign led to Serb crackdown on the province's independence-seeking ethnic Albanians.

Some 10,000 people were killed and thousands vanished in the war. NATO pushed the Serb troops out and forced former autocratic ruler Slobodan Milosevic to relinquish control of Kosovo.

Since then, Kosovo has remained officially part of Serbia-Montenegro, the successor state to Yugoslavia, but is administered by the U.N. mission and NATO-led peacekeepers.

Hundreds of those listed as missing from the war have been found in mass graves in Kosovo and Serbia, but the fate of about 3,000 missing is still to be determined.



Veljko Odalovic, left, head of the Serbian delegation, and Rasip Zekovic, head of the Kosovo-Albanian delegation, shake hands after signing an agreement after talks Wednesday.

Lawmakers to AF: 'There's a charade going on here'

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — House members angrier over upcoming base closings lashed out on Air Force officials on Wednesday for the up-front costs expected and undermeasured savings promised in the Base Realignment And Closure process.

The proposed 2006 defense budget includes \$2.5 billion in closure costs related to the BRAC decisions, even though no bases have yet been publicly identified as scheduled to be closed. Another \$5.7 billion in expenses is expected in 2007.

In addition, the 2006 budget in-

Hearing on 2006 defense budget raises questions on BRAC costs

cludes about \$377 million in costs associated with the 1995 BRAC process, which included Rep. Neil Abernethy, D-Hawaii.

"This is 10 years later and the DOD is still asking for transition money to finance these savings," he said during a House Armed Services hearing.

"It's embarrassing when I go home to have to say there's not a single base secretaries can name that needs to be closed, but there's 24 percent base capacity that has to be gotten rid of. There's a charade going on here."

This year's process marks the

fifth time since 1988 the Defense Department has looked to reduce its base holdings and costs, designed to make the military more efficient.

The list of bases affected is to be released May 16, though changes to that list could be made over the summer.

When pressed by committee members to name an Air Force base that could easily be eliminated, Air Force Secretary Peter Teets declined to pick a facility but defended the process.

"There is a straightforward,

well-structured analysis going on," he said. "In any kind of restructuring activity ... it requires upfront investment to achieve annual savings."

Teets said he has started to hear possible closure scenarios but "no decisions have been made."

Defense officials estimate the earlier BRAC rounds have saved about \$29 billion combined in reduced maintenance costs and profits from land sales.

Earlier in the week Phillip Grono, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and envi-

ronment, said the 24 percent excess capacity figure is only an estimate, and will not require that one in four bases be closed.

However, when pressed by House members, he also admitted the 24 percent figure is not maximum either, and that the study could recommend closing a higher number of facilities as well.

Grono added that officials are taking into account the large number of servicemembers expected to return to U.S. bases from deployment abroad as military officials draw down troop totals in Europe and the Pacific area.

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Military budget crunch fuels concerns child care, services will suffer

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress worried concerns Tuesday that funding for child care centers, barracks maintenance and other military programs will be hurt by what they call inadequate money for construction and repair in the proposed 2006 defense budget.

During a House Armed Services subcommittee hearing, Rep. Joel Henry, R-Colo., said he was "astounded" the Army officials haven't maintained "the level necessary to keep child care centers

open, dining halls serving chow, lights turned on and base employees reporting to work."

Army operations funding will be underfunded by nearly \$1 billion in the proposed 2006 budget, and other military services are also facing cuts in much-needed repair and construction funds, according to subcommittee members.

But defense officials said the funding levels are adequate, and the services are committed to maintaining current programs and providing quality housing to keep servicemembers' morale up.

"Soldiers and their families deserve the

same quality of life as the society they are pledged to defend," said Geoffrey Prosch, deputy assistant secretary for Army installations and environment. "Our construction budget does have the resources for continued support of our mission."

For the Army, the proposed budget includes \$292 million for training-range repairs and upgrades, funding for construction of new barracks for about 5,200 soldiers and new housing for about 5,800 families, and increased money for readiness and reserve centers.

But the \$3.3 billion allotment for Army military construction is only 70 percent of

the anticipated need for operations support funding, well short of the Defense Department budgeting goal of 95 percent.

Joyce Raetz, director of government relations for the National Military Family Association, said her group has heard complaints from families about cuts in basic services, especially at Army posts.

"We're already seeing pink slips handed out to some base employees, hours cut back at dining halls," she said. "This is youth programs. This is fitness programs. We're very concerned about the quality of life at these facilities."

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D.C. anthrax scare was false alarm

By LAURA MECKLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An apparent mix-up at a laboratory is being blamed for the anthrax scare that closed three area mail facilities that handle Pentagon-bound mail, and prompted nearly 900 workers to receive antibiotics.

The two-day scare that recalled the fatal bioterrorism attacks of 2001 turned out to be a false alarm after definitive tests at two facilities came back negative Tuesday for the deadly spores.

Officials believe the confusion stemmed from a mistake at the laboratory that did the initial testing, and the mistaken conclusion was confirmed by a Defense Department laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md.

The working theory is that workers at the initial laboratory, Commonwealth Biotechnology Inc. in Richmond, Va., contaminated the sample taken from the Pentagon with actual anthrax that is kept on hand for comparison purposes, a Homeland Security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Wednesday. That would explain why the sample came back as positive for anthrax.

That initial sample, possibly already contaminated, was then delivered to Fort Detrick, which confirmed the presence of anthrax.

"It had already been handled by the contractor," said Carey Vander Linden, spokeswoman for the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick.

Later tests proved negative and officials re-evaluated the initial error, officials said.



A Pentagon police officer walks past a closed Pentagon mail facility in Falls Church, Va., on Tuesday. The anthrax scare was a false alarm apparently caused by a lab mix-up.

Warning signs at the two Pentagon mail facilities on Monday led to the comprehensive testing. Nearly 900 workers were given precautionary antibiotics, and officials closed three mail facilities at the Pentagon and in Washington.

"We have nothing to suggest anything remotely like the events of October 2001, and we hope that with further information we'll be able to completely rule out any threat at all," Dr. William Winkenwerder, assistant defense secretary for health affairs, said.

Winkenwerder said some additional tests remained incomplete. All tests that have been completed on samples from both Pentagon facilities have come back negative, he said.

Workers who were advised to take antibiotics would be told to stop if those tests also proved negative, Winkenwerder said.

In 2001 anthrax-by-mail attacks killed five people and panicked Americans still from the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Since then,

scores of initial tests in government mailrooms have falsely reported anthrax. But this week's alarm was set off by two alert systems that independently suggested the presence of the bacteria — what officials now believe was a coincidence.

First, a filter on a device that screens mail for chemical and biological agents on the Pentagon grounds tested positive for anthrax. Separately, an alert was set off by a nearby satellite mail processing facility. Officials set out to retest the initial filter and gathered additional samples from the facilities for testing.

Initially, tests suggested anthrax might be present, according to a counterterrorism official close to the investigation.

Subsequent testing of both the initial filter and of other samples at both locations came back negative, Winkenwerder said.

"We're very encouraged with the information that we now have in hand," he said.

Associated Press Writer Lara Jakes Jordan contributed to this report.

Bush taps 8 to review BRAC

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Tuesday nominated eight people with ties to defense to serve on the commission charged with closing U.S. military bases.

The president previously nominated former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi to lead the nine-member independent commission.

Congress authorized the fifth round of closures last year.

If confirmed by the Senate, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission will review a list of closures the Pentagon must propose by May.

The president nominated:

■ James H. Bilbray of Nevada, a former Air Force reservist and a former congressman who served on international relations, armed services and intelligence committees.

■ Philip Coyle of California, a senior adviser to the Center for Defense Information and a former assistant defense secretary.

■ Harold W. Gehman Jr. of Virginia, a retired Navy admiral and former NATO supreme allied commander.

■ James V. Hansen of Utah, a Navy veteran and former congressman who served on the armed services committee.

■ James T. Hill of Florida, a retired Air Force general and former combatant commander of the U.S. Southern Command.

■ Claude M. Kicklighter of Georgia, a retired Air Force lieutenant general and the assistant secretary for policy and planning at the Veterans Affairs Department.

■ Samuel Knox Skinner of Illinois, a former Army reservist and one-time chief of staff and secretary of transportation under President George H.W. Bush.

■ Sue Ellen Turner of Texas, a retired Air Force brigadier general who is a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission.

Congressional leaders were permitted to recommend six members.

Bush nominated five of them. The sixth was Gen. John G. Coburn, a former Air Force chief of staff, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., had recommended him to Bush, but Coburn withdrew his name from consideration this week.

Air Force's Essex selected as next AAFES commander

Stars and Stripes

The Air Force announced Monday that Maj. Gen. Paul W. "Bill" Essex will be the new commander of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

Essex is now director of Plans and Programs, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

In this capacity, he is responsible for force structure planning and programming, doctrine, requirements, manpower and analysis for the nation's airlift and refueling force.

Prior to assuming his current position, General Essex was the Mission Area Director for Global Reach Programs, Office of the Assistant Secretary

of the Air Force for Acquisition, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington.

AAFES' current commander Maj. Gen. Kathryn Frost will leave the post April 7 to retire, said AAFES spokesman Judd Anstey.

Until Essex's arrival in late June 2005, AAFES' Acting Commander will be Air Force Brig. Gen. J. Torsen Steele.

Frost is married to Martin Frost, a former U.S. Representative from Texas, who is to become a political commentator for the Fox News Channel.

Frost lost his seat in November after redistricting engineered by majority leader Tom DeLay forced him into a race against Republican Pete Sessions. He served 26 years in Congress.



Maj. Gen. Paul "Bill" Essex

Alleged 9/11 Pentagon flag back on auction

The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — An American flag reportedly flown at the Pentagon during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks is up for sale again after the high bidder withdrew his offer.

Todd Schimmel, 26, of Mount, Minn., took back his \$371,300 bid Tuesday after doubt was raised about whether the flag had really been flying during the

Doubt cast over its authenticity

attack.

Schimmel did not return phone calls from The Associated Press on Tuesday. A request for comment e-mailed to the eBay account of the high bidder brought a brief response. "Flag is a fake I'm not accepting."

David Nicholson, 44, of Orange, Va., auctioned the flag on

eBay to raise money for his kidney cancer treatment.

The flag reportedly flew over a construction crane at the Pentagon. But during the original auction, Maryland-based Faccina Construction Co., which gave Nicholson the flag, said it did not have a crane at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

An update on the controversy is included in the description for the new, three-day auction, which was started on eBay on Tuesday evening. The description also includes the text of a letter of authenticity Nicholson said is signed by a Faccina site supervisor.

"Everything happens for a reason, and it will all work out for the best," Nicholson said.

Blast outside U.S. bases kills four Iraqis

No Americans were wounded in car bombing

BY CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

BAQUBA, Iraq — Four Iraqi soldiers were killed and another 17 wounded Wednesday when a car bomb exploded at a checkpoint outside the gates of Forward Operating Bases Warhorse and Scuncheon.

Some U.S. troops first thought the explosion was a planned blast to destroy enemy bombs. But the blast wasn't planned, at least not by the U.S. soldiers, who were soon scrambling to save their comrades in the Iraqi army.

"They're just here to do their jobs, to help," said Sgt. Charles Graham. "To me, losing one of them is like losing one of us."

Soldiers from Graham's unit, the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, arrived on the scene from Scuncheon as Iraqi soldiers piled the casualties into the backs of their white Toyota pickups. The casualties were driven to the gate at FOB Warhorse and met by U.S. medics and combat medics from Warhorse's clinic.

"It was pretty messy," said Graham, whose unit had performed missions with the same group of Iraqi soldiers. "A lot of guys were injured by shrapnel. There was a lot of blood, a lot of blood."

All of the casualties were members of the 204th Iraqi Army Battalion. There was no immediate word if there were civilian casualties. No U.S. soldiers were wounded.

Graham's soldiers secured the scene, and the frantic Iraqis were met at Warhorse's gate by medics from Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion. In the minutes after the 8:43 a.m. blast, the clinic received radio reports that four were wounded, then eight, nine and 16. It sent more help as the casualty estimate rose.

At the gate, the medics sifted through the carnage.

"The first two guys I saw were dead," said Sgt. Charles Kevin Lours. "We moved them out of the way to get to the other guys."

"We tried to get the most critical guys [to the clinic first]," he said.



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Left: A wounded Iraqi soldier is treated by medics from Company C, 203rd Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Team, 42nd Infantry Division, after a car bomb exploded Wednesday morning in Baquba, Iraq. The car bomb, which detonated at a checkpoint manned by Iraq army soldiers, killed four of the soldiers and wounded 17. Above: A wounded Iraqi soldier is carried on a stretcher by American medics.

Once at the clinic, called the Teal Medical Facility, the wounded were carried on stretchers from the ambulances into the clinic and its waiting team.

Others weren't so lucky.

Besides the two Iraqi soldiers who died at the scene, one was declared dead at the front gate of Warhorse and the fourth died on the operating table, according to Dr. (Maj.) Andy Magnet, brigade surgeon for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, which is based at FOB Warhorse.

In addition to those killed, eight Iraqi soldiers were evacuated for treatment to the 31st Combat Support Hospital at Logistics Support Area Anaconda about 30 miles to the west. Eight Iraqi soldiers were treated and returned to duty. One was scheduled to stay overnight at the Warhorse clinic.

Inside the clinic, the wounded were placed on treatment tables in rows and treated by U.S. medics. Others sat stunned in chairs a few feet away in the makeshift waiting room, one resting his bandaged head on a blood-stained hand.

The blast upset what had been a lull in violence for the past several weeks for the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty, which has been helping the Iraqi set new local governments and

begin reconstruction projects in north-central Iraq.

A late-arriving Iraqi soldier stormed into the clinic, had a quick word with a comatose, then turned and wailed with his fist as he stormed back outside crying. His brother had been one of those killed.

According to Maj. Adnan Gassan, one of the Iraqis in charge, the car bomber drove past him at the checkpoint before detonating his blast. The driver, Gassan said, was a boy who appeared to be 13 or 14 years old.

All four of those who died were married with children, Gassan said.

"They [Iraqi soldiers] are people who just want to help," Gassan said through an interpreter. "They just want to stabilize the situation [in the province of] Diyala," which of Baquba is the capital.

"This incident will make us more strong," he added as a nearby U.S. soldier mopped blood drops off the clinic's floor. "We will do our best to avenge our peaceful soldiers. We will do our best to follow and capture the terrorists."

"We know they will be defeated."

E-mail Charlie Coon at: coonc@mail.strips.ood.mil

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Land mine kills GI in Afghanistan

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A land mine killed a U.S. soldier in western Afghanistan, the American military said Wednesday, even as the top U.S. general insisted that security in the war-ravaged country was "exceptionally good."

News of the explosion came as Gen. Richard Myers said the United States is considering putting long-term bases in Afghanistan as it repositions its forces worldwide.

The mine hit a group of U.S. military police on Tuesday near an American base in Shindand,

close to the Iranian border, killing one soldier and injuring four more, the military said in a statement.

One of the wounded suffered a severe back injury, another was in stable condition and two were treated and returned to duty, it said. None of the soldiers were identified in the statement.

Myers, the visiting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that Afghanistan remained "a target" for al-Qaida and that a hard core of Taliban militants were likely to fight on.

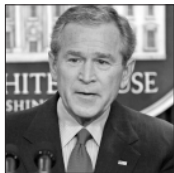
But he also said the Taliban were "essentially in disarray" since failing to disrupt landmark presidential elections last year.

"Security is very good throughout the country, exceptionally good," Myers told reporters at Kabul airport after talks with Afghan President Hamid Karzai and U.S. commanders here.

Myers said he had yet to advise President Bush on whether to seek permanent American bases on Afghan soil.

"But clearly we've developed good relationships and good partnerships in this part of the world, not only in Afghanistan," Myers said at a news conference, also mentioning existing U.S. bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The American military has about 17,000 troops in Afghanistan.



At a news conference Wednesday, President Bush said U.S. troops wouldn't be withdrawn from Iraq until the country is ready to defend itself.

Bush: No timetable to leave Iraq

BY TERENCE HUNT
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush said Wednesday he understands the desire of U.S. coalition partners to withdraw troops from Iraq, but he declined to set a timetable for bringing American forces home and said he hoped others would also stay the course.

"Our troops will come home when Iraq is capable of defending herself," Bush told reporters.

Bush spoke a day after Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi announced plans to start drawing down his country's 3,000-strong contingent in Iraq amid widespread anger over the recent killing of an Italian officer by U.S. troops.

Some 14 nations have withdrawn troops since the U.S.-led March 2003 invasion of Iraq.

In a news conference at the White House, Bush said he had spoken by telephone to Bertusconi

earlier in the day and they talked about both Iraq and Bush's recommendation of Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to become head of the World Bank.

"He wanted me to know that there was no change in his policy, that, in fact, any withdrawals would be done in consultation with allies and would be done depending upon the ability of Iraqis to defend themselves," Bush said.

Bush shrugged off a question about detainees being sent by the

United States back to their home countries, where they could be tortured.

"The United States must make sure we protect our people and our friends from attack. One way to do so is arrest people and send them back" to their home countries, he said. "We seek assurances that no one will be tortured."

On another topic, Bush said Iran must permanently ban uranium reprocessing to reassure the world that its government is not concealing a nuclear weapons program. Otherwise, Bush said, he and leaders of European nations that are negotiating directly with Tehran have agreed to take the issue to the United Nations.

On Iraq, Bush said he understood the desire of countries to bring their troops home. "What you're going to find is that countries will be willing, anxious to leave — but only when Iraqi police and security forces are capable of taking over the war now done by coalition forces."

He denied that what the administration has called the "coalition of the willing" was crumbling.

Bush also praised Iraq for Wednesday's opening session of the country's first freely elected parliament in half a century.

Bush called the meeting "a bright moment" in Iraq's history.

THE FACE OF WAR HAS CHANGED.



Photo courtesy Soldier Magazine

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Iraq parliament opens amid nearby bombings

BY RAWYA RAGEH
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq's first freely elected parliament in half a century began its opening session Wednesday after a series of explosions targeted the gathering.

The parliament's 275 members, elected during Jan. 30 balloting, convened in an auditorium amid tight security in the heavily guarded Green Zone, with U.S. helicopter gunships hovering overhead.

Minutes before the assembly convened, at least a half-dozen explosions detonated a few hundred yards away. The U.S. military said two mortar rounds landed inside the zone but caused no injuries.

After Wednesday's session ended, another mortar shell hit an empty building in central Baghdad's Karradah neighborhood, setting the two-story structure on fire, police and witnesses said. There were no reports of injuries.

The lawmakers opened with a reading of verses from the Quran.

Iraqi Chief Justice Medhat al Mahmood then administered the oath to the assembled deputies.

"It is a great day in Iraqi history that its elected representatives meet," said Foad Mas-soum, a Kurdish delegate.

"This day coincides with a painful memory that has many meanings. ... Today, on this occasion, we celebrate the inauguration of parliament after the fall of this regime."

Wednesday marked the anniversary of the Saddam Hussein-ordered chemical attack in 1988 on the northern Kurdish town of Halabja, an attack that killed 5,000 people.

Iraqi leaders have not yet agreed on a coalition government, and the leader of the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance, cleric Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, said his alliance hoped to "form a government whose motto is to serve the Iraqi people, a government of national unity and reconciliation."

"A government that can root out violence



Iraq's National Assembly, the country's first freely elected parliament in half a century, convenes in Baghdad on Wednesday. The gathering marks a major milestone on the road to forming a new government in the insurgent-ravaged country.

and set a trial for Saddam and the elements of his regime," Hakim said in a speech that wove in and out of prayer. He said a government led by the alliance would also try "to achieve the independence of Iraq and put an end to the role of multinational forces in Iraq."

Jalal Talabani, the Kurdish leader who will probably become Iraq's next president, said deputies "all have a duty to achieve real national unity."

"Iraq is facing tough times due to the continuation of criminal terror crimes," he said.

"Al-Qaida is waging a war of extermination on Kurds and Shiites."

On Tuesday, Shiite Muslim officials said they failed to reach final agreement in talks with the Kurds — who are mostly Sunni Muslim but secular — and the Sunni Arabs.

Ali al-Dabagh, a member of the Shiite clergy-dominated United Iraqi Alliance, which won the most seats in the elections, said Tuesday that Shiite, Kurdish and Sunni Arab politicians would meet after the deputies are sworn in "to finalize things. We need two to three days to announce an agreement."

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Tuesday at least 1,516 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

At least 1,156 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,378 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,047 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A servicemember was killed while on patrol early Tuesday when an explosive detonated.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Joshua L. Torrence, 20, Lexington, S.C., killed Monday in Iraq's Anbar province; assigned to 2nd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

House approves \$81.4B war-spending package

BY LIZ SIDOTI
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved an \$81.4 billion package for combat and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, which would push the total cost of the wars beyond \$300 billion.

By a 388-43 vote, the House gave President Bush most of the money he had requested, with strong support from both Republicans and Democrats. The Senate will consider its version in April.

The legislation is the fifth emergency spending plan Bush has sent to Congress for war costs since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

In a setback for the White House, the House trimmed president's request for Afghan reconstruction projects and State Department programs and prohibited any money in the bill from being used to build a sprawling U.S. embassy in Baghdad, despite intense lobbying by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The moves sent a signal to the president that while lawmakers would give troops what they needed, emergency spending packages for the war should only be used to pay for urgent matters.

"The reason for this supplemental is to provide as quickly as possible money flows in support of our troops," Rep. Jerry Lewis, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said in urging passage.

The White House said in a statement that while it supports the bill as a whole, the president is concerned that the legislation does not adequately pay for matters deemed urgent by the administration, including the State Department programs.

U.S. diplomatic officials in Iraq currently are working out of one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces and the White House says a fortified U.S. embassy in Iraq is needed immediately.

"Postponing construction will delay moving our people into more safe, secure and functional facilities," the White House said.



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IN THE STATES

Bush taps Wolfowitz as World Bank head

BY JEANNINE AVERSA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush on Wednesday tapped Defense Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who has been a lightning rod for criticism of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and other defense policies, to take over as head of the World Bank.

Bush told a news conference that Wolfowitz, now Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's top deputy, was "a compassionate, decent man who will do a fine job at the World Bank. That's why I put him in."

The administration began notifying other countries that Wolfowitz was the U.S.

candidate to replace World Bank President James Wolfensohn, who is stepping down as head of the 184-nation development bank on June 1 at the end of his second five-year term.

The United States is the World Bank's largest shareholder. The bank traditionally has had an American president and its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund, traditionally has been headed by a European.

Bush noted that he had called Premier Silvio Berlusconi to talk about Iraq and other issues earlier in the day and said that he had discussed Wolfowitz, "my nominee," with the Italian leader.

Wolfowitz, 61, was among the most forceful of those in the Bush administration in arguing that Iraq's Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, and he had predicted that Americans would be welcomed as liberators once they toppled Saddam's government.

A conservative scholar and veteran of six administrations, Wolfowitz earned a reputation for being a foreign policy hawk — representing the view that the United



Wolfowitz

States should use its superpower status to push for reforms in other nations.

He came under fire on Capitol Hill for underestimating the number of U.S. troops needed in Iraq and for underestimating the number of U.S. troops killed in Iraq during testimony to a House panel. He also was criticized for predicting before the invasion that Iraq oil would generate \$50 billion to \$100 billion over two to three years, limiting the war costs to U.S. taxpayers. Iraq generated just \$17 billion in oil revenues in the first 19 months after the invasion.

The World Bank's 24-member board will vote on Bush's selection of Wolfowitz to head the development bank. Approval is expected.

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Judge affirms death penalty for Peterson

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF

The Associated Press

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. — A judge formally sentenced Scott Peterson to death Wednesday after family members got into a shouting match and Laci Peterson's mother sobbed as she called her son-in-law "an evil murderer."

Judge Alfred A. Delucchi allowed only Laci's family members to speak at the hearing after indicating he believed the death penalty was warranted.

Peterson's father yelled from the audience as Laci's brother, Brent Rocha, spoke to the court, saying, "Laci and Conner are the true victims here."

"What a liar!" Lee Peterson said before the judge admonished him and he stormed out of the courtroom. Jackie Peterson, Scott Peterson's mother, also interrupted Rocha but her voice was inaudible.

Scott Peterson, 32, was invited to make a statement. After several minutes of discussion with his attorneys, he declined.

Delucchi denied a defense request for a new trial before upholding the jury's recommendation that Peterson be sentenced to death.

"The court is satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant, Scott Lee Peterson, is guilty of first-degree murder" and second degree, Delucchi said, adding that he found the killings "were cruel, uncaring, heartless and callous."

Peterson, shackled at the waist and wearing a dark suit, showed no emotion throughout the hearing.

Peterson will be sent to death row at San Quentin State Prison within 48 hours, said San Mateo County Sheriff's Lt. Lisa Williams.

The infamous lockup overlooks the same bay where Laci Peterson's body was discovered.

Laci's mother, Sharon Rocha, sobbed and trembled from a podium as she lashed out at her former son-in-law. Scott Peterson stared back at her without emotion.

"You decided to throw Laci and Conner away, dispose of them like they were just a piece of garbage," she said. "You were wrong, dead wrong."

Dabbing at her eyes with tissues, she called him "an evil murderer."

"The fact that you no longer wanted Laci did not give you the right to murder her," Sharon Rocha said. "She was my daughter. I trusted you, and you betrayed me. ... You betrayed everybody."

Peterson was convicted in November of first-degree murder in the killing of Laci and second-degree murder for the slaying of her fetus. A jury recommended the death penalty a month later.

The judge ordered Scott Peterson to pay \$10,000 restitution for funeral expenses and an additional \$5,000, though the reason for that amount was unexplained.

Terror alert plan for states

WASHINGTON — The agency charged with protecting homeland security developed an elaborate, confidential report to alert states to a host of terror-strike scenarios, but the document was inadvertently posted on several states' public Web sites before being removed.

The department has been working for a year on a National Planning Scenarios plan that outlines a number of plausible attacks. The report will be made public in upcoming months, Homeland Security spokesman Brian Roehrkasse said Tuesday.

From The Associated Press

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Investigator testifies in Michael Jackson case

SANTA MARIA, Calif. — The lead investigator in the Michael Jackson child molestation case said he urged the accuser and his family to go forward with his claims against the singer by promising them, "We're going to try our best to make this case work."

Defense attorney Robert Sanger confronted Sgt. Steve Robel on Tuesday with those and other statements from recorded interviews, suggesting they indicated investigators were biased against Jackson from the beginning.

Robel's testimony came after the singer's accuser wrapped up his testimony by saying he told a school administrator that Jackson had not molested him because he wanted to avoid teasing from classmates.

Former WorldCom employees: Conviction fitting

NEW YORK — Some former employees and investors who lost jobs and billions of dollars in the collapse of WorldCom said the conviction of former CEO Bernard Ebbers was a fitting final act to the epic accounting scandal.

Ebbers was found guilty Tuesday of fraud, conspiracy and false regulatory filings after a six-week federal trial in Manhattan. He could spend the rest of his life in prison.

"This just proves that when you don't use ethics, when you take your power and misuse it, that there is a price to pay," said Kate Lee, who formed a group of former WorldCom employees and successfully fought for severance.

Judge Barbara Jones set sentencing for June 13.

The nine criminal counts against Ebbers, 63, carry up to 85 years in prison.

Deliberations in beauty queen murder trial continue

SAVANNAH, Ga. — Jurors deliberated for a second day Wednesday in the murder trial of beauty queen Sharon Nicole Redmond, who shot her boyfriend outside the home of another woman he was dating.

Redmond, 23, faces an automatic life sentence if convicted of murdering Kevin Shorter on Dec. 16, 2003, four months after she was crowned Miss Savannah. Redmond says she shot him in self-defense.

The jury of nine women and three men deliberated nearly five hours Tuesday before breaking for the night without a verdict.

Redmond shot Shorter, 25, after a confrontation outside the home of his second girlfriend, Rachel Hall. He had dated both women for about three years.

From The Associated Press



As a non-drinker, you have a legitimate and respected role at a gathering where alcohol is served. A designated driver is a valued member of the group. In fact, if you would rather not drink, helping out as a designated driver legitimizes your choice.

Having a designated driver is the most effective prevention because it removes all risks related to drinking and driving. Many people mistakenly believe that only a person who shows stereotypical signs of drunkenness, such as stumbling or slurred speech, is too drunk to drive. However, for many people, impairment can occur after one or two drinks. The designated driver approach is valuable because it does not require the driver or passenger to determine when one is too impaired to drive. Simply stated, the designated driver does not drink.

The designated driver program is supported by all Army in Europe installations. Most on post clubs provide free sodas and coffee for the designated driver. Your designated driver gets you to all the cool places and makes sure that you don't end up in a cool place called a mortuary.

Calif. justice warns lack of court security breeds fear

By DON THOMPSON

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Noting recent violence against judges, the chief justice of California's Supreme Court urged lawmakers to boost security at courthouses, saying "the integrity and efficacy of the entire judicial process is in jeopardy."

Two-thirds of the state's 451 courthouses lack adequate security, Ronald M. George told state legislators Tuesday, only days after a Georgia judge, court reporter and sheriff's deputy were slain in a rampage.

Courthouses often have multiple entrances, inadequate screening, and no way to separate jurors, witnesses or suspects, he said. In some, jailed suspects must be moved through public hallways or through corridors past judges' chambers to get into the courtroom.

The Atlanta shootings, and the recent slayings in Chicago of a federal judge's husband and mother, are shocking in part because "it highlights the physical vulnerability of our courts and



California State Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald M. George

shatters the public's expectation that black-robed judges occupying a high bench can dispense justice unthreatened by the dangers of everyday life," George suggested.

George recalled visiting a judge who had stacked law books in front of his bench as a barrier

against flying bullets after his rural courthouse was the scene of an attempted hostage-taking.

"We need to make sure that courthouses are safe so that the law books can remain on the shelves where they belong — and not substitute for a bulletproof shield," he said in his annual address to the Legislature.

Just on Monday, a reputed gang member in a San Fernando courtroom allegedly slashed his attorney with a concealed razor blade during his murder trial, George said.

"Such an environment of insecurity and intimidation is unacceptable," George said. "Courthouses must be a safe harbor to which members of the public come to resolve disputes that often are volatile. Once courthouses themselves are perceived as dangerous, the integrity and efficacy of the entire judicial process is in jeopardy."

Courthouse security is not the only problem, he said. Some do not meet earthquake standards, are contaminated by toxic mold, or are housed in trailers. And three-quarters do not comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act.



A DESIGNATED DRIVER

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Charities stop seeking tsunami-aid donations

Groups want to ensure money is used 'effectively'

BY DAVID PACE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Despite reconstruction costs estimated at up to \$12 billion, several major charities and relief groups have stopped soliciting donations for survivors of December's Indian Ocean tsunami. At least one has begun returning money to donors.

Sensitized by recent charity scandals, agencies say they're being careful not to accept more money than they can legitimately spend to help tsunami victims.

The American Red Cross and British-based Oxfam stopped raising tsunami relief funds over a

month ago, when pledges hit spending targets. Britain's Disasters Emergency Committee stopped last month, for the same reason.

Catholic Relief Services also has ceased active solicitation, with \$114 million in hand for \$80 million in currently programmed tsunami relief work. Doctors Without Borders has returned more than \$500,000 in donations it couldn't use.

"We didn't want the restricted funds to outpace our capacity to use them effectively in the field," said Nicolas de Torrente, executive director of Doctors Without Borders. "We want to be responsible toward our donors and re-

spect their wishes, that if they give for the tsunami, it will be used for that."

Since the Dec. 26 tsunami killed more than 70,000 people in 11 Asian countries, governments have pledged more than \$6 billion in relief and reconstruction funds. The United States initially pledged \$350 million, including \$226 million the U.S. military spent in emergency relief. President Bush has asked Congress to increase the overall U.S. aid package to \$950 million.

Americans have donated another \$1 billion to relief agencies, and British citizens have contributed \$575 million.

Jan Egeland, emergency relief coordinator for the United Nations, said most of the nearly \$1 billion the world body initially sought for emergency relief has been received and spent on food, shelter and medical help for tsunami survivors.

Governments and development groups now are focused on the estimated \$12 billion in reconstruction costs. Officials expect incidents of theft and fraud to increase as reconstruction gets under way.

"There is a limit to how much you can misuse a blanket, really, or how much you can misuse a bottle of purified water, or food ration," Egeland said. "It's more complicated if you are to rebuild highways, airports, schools and so on, and our development colleagues are acutely aware of that."

Egeland said an agreement is near completion for the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers to help track and verify the United Nations' relief donations and spending and to investigate allegations of wrongdoing.



Nonnie Hawkins holds her grandson, Emmanuel Hawkins, at their home in Atlanta on Monday. Emmanuel, who turned 1 on Wednesday, was given little chance to live while in the womb of his mother, Tara, who delivered him while in a coma.

AP

Baby born while mom in coma reaches age 1

BY ERRIN HAINES

The Associated Press

DECATUR, Ga. — Emmanuel Hawkins celebrated a birthday Wednesday that he was never supposed to live to see.

For 16 weeks after his mother lapsed into a coma brought on by an assault, Emmanuel continued to grow inside her womb. Doctors tried to persuade his grandmother, Nonnie Hawkins, to end the pregnancy. They warned her that even if Emmanuel was born, he could be severely deformed — or stillborn.

"I told them, 'I rebuke you.' I have the final say," Hawkins said. "I'm believing my child is going to wake up and have this baby."

But after 114 days, Tara Hawkins-Bottoms never woke up. The 18-year-old did, however, stay alive long enough to give birth on March 16, 2004, to a 2-pound, 10-ounce boy.

"God delivered him," Hawkins said. Her daughter was taken off life support two days later.

Born three months premature — very weak and barely breath-

ing — Emmanuel was not expected to survive 24 hours. He was hospitalized for 10 weeks with medical problems that included a bacterial infection and low blood pressure, and had to have heart and eye surgery.

"He was as close to death's door as you can get without entering," said his doctor, neo-natologist Bridget Cobb. "To come from those circumstances is just miraculous to me. It was a reminder to me that I am not in charge."

Emmanuel's struggles from his first months of life are fading into a memory as he slips into the routine of a normal toddler.

He is trying to take his first steps. He likes peek-a-boo, apple juice and classical music. Hawkins says he is now "completely healthy."

She says the boy is her saving grace after the death of her daughter, who was attacked in November 2003 by a neighborhood acquaintance.

"This whole thing has been a nightmare," she said. "I would lose my mind if I didn't have Emmanuel."

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Cronkite's wife dies

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mary Elizabeth "Betsy" Cronkite, the wife of former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite, has died, the newsmen's assistant said Wednesday. She was 89.

She died of complications of cancer Tuesday night at the couple's Manhattan apartment, said the assistant, Julie Sulman.

Walter Cronkite met his future wife, born Mary Elizabeth Maxwell, while they were both working at radio station KCMO in Kansas City, Mo. They married in 1940, and shortly afterward she became Cronkite's editor of the Kansas City Journal-Star.

While her husband was overseas reporting for United Press during much of World War II, she worked for Hallmark, publishing a company newspaper that also was distributed to members of the armed forces, Sulman said.

In his 1996 biography, "A Reporter's Life," Cronkite wrote: "I attribute the longevity of our marriage to Betsy's extraordinary sense of humor, which saw us over many bumps (mostly of my making), and her tolerance, even support, for the uncertain schedule and wanderings of a newsmen."

In addition to her husband, she is survived by two daughters, Nancy and Kathy, a son, Walter III, and four grandsons.

Daniel Pearl Award

LOS ANGELES — Jesus Blancornelas, editor of Zeta, a leading Mexican investigative newspaper, will be the fourth recipient of the Daniel Pearl Award for Courage and Integrity in Journalism.

Blancornelas, 69, co-founded the Tijuana-based weekly a quarter-century ago and has written investigative stories on drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and government corruption.

The Pearl Award will be presented to Blancornelas by Judea and Ruth Pearl, parents of the late Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, who was killed after being abducted by Islamic militants in Pakistan.

Man admits sex crimes

LOS ANGELES — A 61-year-old man has pleaded guilty to having sex with underage boys in the Philippines and producing child pornography and is expected to be sentenced to 17 years in prison, authorities said.

Edilberto Datan, a retired state evidence auditor from San Diego, acknowledged that he had sex with eight boys, ages 14 and 15, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said in a statement Tuesday.

Datan entered his plea March 1 in federal court to one count of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places and one count of

Harvard president's resignation sought

Arts faculty passes 'lack of confidence' motion

BY JUSTIN POPE

The Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Harvard President Lawrence Summers was hoping for a sign that the worst was behind him, that critics were prepared to accept his apologies and move on.

Instead, Summers got a reminder Tuesday of just how angry some Harvard faculty members are over his management style and recent controversial comments about women in science.

In a surprising — if only symbolic — 218-185 vote, Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences approved a motion expressing a "lack of confidence" in Summers' leadership.

In Harvard's nearly 400-year history, which includes bitter disputes between presidents and faculty over everything from religion to investment in apartheid-era South Africa, such a vote was unprecedented.

"This was a resounding statement the faculty lacks confidence in President Lawrence Summers and he should resign," said J. Lorand Matory, a professor of anthropology and African and African-American Studies who submitted the motion.

"There is no noble alternative to resignation." Summers has given no indication he would consider stepping down. He officially answers only to the Harvard Corporation, the university's governing body, which has expressed support for him.

Furthermore, the arts and sciences faculty is just one of 10 that comprise Harvard.

Still, the vote Tuesday came as a surprise — even Matory said he expected no more than 30 percent support — and complicates Summers' efforts to regain momentum for an agenda of remaking the university.

That agenda appears to have been largely sidetracked as Summers has spent much of the last two months dealing with fallout from the controversy, which ignited with comments he made at an academic conference on women in science.

"That's a 50-50 question," said emeritus professor Horacio Sevckeno, when asked if Summers could continue to lead Harvard effectively. "Much depends on the way he behaves."

At the January conference, Summers argued that intrinsic differences in ability are a key reason why fewer women are in the applicant pool for jobs at the highest levels of science.

He has apologized repeatedly, though a number of supporters have argued he was raising a legitimate academic question.

Many faculty had expected that only a milder resolution — expressing "regret" over both Summers' comments and "aspects of the President's managerial approach" but not his commitment to addressing the issues — would pass. But both measures were approved, the latter by a 253-137 vote.

"I thought the conservative forces would be much stronger than they turned out to be," Sevckeno said.

Summers spoke briefly to reporters after-



Harvard University President Lawrence Summers steps into a car after Tuesday's faculty meeting at Harvard, in Cambridge, Mass. Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences passed a no-confidence vote against Summers on Tuesday in the wake of his comments about women's aptitude for science and math.

ward, struggling to make himself heard over the voices of protesters.

"As I said to the faculty, I have tried these last couple months to listen to all that has been said, to learn from it, and to move forward, and that's what I am going to do," Summers said.

The criticism over Summers' comments quickly expanded into a broader attack on the president's management style and his vision for the university, including major projects to expand Harvard's campus across the Charles River in Boston.

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From The Associated Press

IN THE WORLD

Russian plane crash kills at least 29

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — A 1970s-era Russian turboprop airliner carrying 53 people crashed and caught fire Wednesday while trying to land near an oil port along the Arctic coast, and at least 29 people were killed, officials said. Some survivors used a satellite phone to call authorities from the wreckage.

A Russian emergency official said on condition of anonymity that the plane's tail was falling

apart before the crash. An investigation into the crash is under way.

There were 46 passengers and seven crew members aboard the Regional Airlines An-24 plane that crashed near Varandei in the Nenets autonomous region along Russia's Arctic coast. Regional is a small, private carrier.

Twenty-nine people were killed, said Sergei Vlasov, spokesman for the Emergency Situations Ministry. Of the 24 survivors, 10 were in grave condition, Vlasov said.

Most of the passengers worked for the Lukoil oil company.

Yuri Kovalyov, spokesman for the local branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry, said survivors contacted authorities on a satellite phone and rescuers quickly reached the site.

The plane was approaching the airport when it suddenly banked and slammed into the ground near Varandei, about 1,110 miles northeast of Moscow.

The plane departed from the city of Ufa in the southern Ural

Mountains region and made stopovers in the cities of Perm and Ussinsk before continuing on to Varandei.

The An-24 is a Soviet-designed turboprop airliner built in the 1960s for short and medium-length trips. Hundreds are still in service with airlines in Russia and other former Soviet republics, and analysts have warned that small airlines have had trouble properly maintaining the aging aircraft.

The Transport Ministry said in

a statement that the plane that crashed was built in 1972 and had been repaired 10 times, the latest in 2002. The plane's chief pilot, Viktor Popov, who apparently died in the crash, had logged up 14,000 flight hours, it said.

"It was a very experienced crew," the chief of the Transport Ministry's aviation department, Alexander Neraldok, said in televised comments.

Most of the passengers worked for Russia's Lukoil, company spokesman Mikhail Mikhailov said.

Rice visits India, Pakistan

BY ANNE GEARAN
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — The United States and India papered over differences on U.S. arms sales to Pakistan and an Indian natural gas pipeline deal with Iran on Wednesday, ahead of a possible visit to India by President Bush later this year.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussed future sales of sophisticated F-16 fighter planes to both India and rival Pakistan with her Indian counterpart before flying to Pakistan, but said no announcement is imminent.

India wants to buy the U.S. weaponry while denying it to Pakistan. The neighboring rivals have fought three wars since their 1947 independence from Britain.

Meanwhile, the United States wants India to scotch a potential deal to build an oil pipeline from Iran to serve the expanding economy in India, the world's largest

democracy.

"We did express ... concerns about several matters on the defense issue," Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh said at a joint press conference with Rice.

"There are one or two items on which we don't agree, but our relations have now reached a maturity where we can discuss these things freely and frankly."

Rice said U.S. objections to the proposed \$4 billion pipeline are well-known. The United States has no diplomatic relations with Iran and wants to keep international pressure on the Tehran regime to give up nuclear ambitions and institute democratic reforms.

Singh, however, indicated little willingness to back off pipeline discussions.

"We have no problems of any kind with Iran," Singh said. India has had disagreements with Iran over the price of fuel the line would carry.



U.S. EMBASSY/AP
Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice receives flowers from Pakistani children upon her arrival Wednesday in Islamabad, Pakistan.

North Korea won't deal with Rice

The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea bitterly refused Wednesday any dealings with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, as the top U.S. diplomat began a six-day visit to Asia seeking a breakthrough in the two-year standoff over the North's nuclear weapons program.

North Korea was angered in January when Rice labeled it one of the world's "outposts of tyranny." She has refused to withdraw the remark and said it reflects the truth about the communist country.

"It is quite illogical for the U.S. to intend to negotiate with [North Korea] without retracting its remarks listing its dialogue partner as 'an outpost of tyranny,'" a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said Wednesday.

Israel hands over Jericho to Palestinians

JERICHO, West Bank — Israeli troops handed this West Bank town to Palestinian security control on Wednesday, dismantling a checkpoint and easing travel restrictions in what was seen as a message to ordinary Palestinians that an informal truce is starting to pay off.

Jericho was the first of five West Bank towns to be handed over. Israel's redeployment Wednesday gave a boost to Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas as he tried to formalize a cease-fire deal with Palestinian militant groups.

EU ministers delay talks with Croatia

BRUSSELS, Belgium — European Union foreign ministers on Wednesday delayed membership talks with Croatia because the Zagreb government has not sent a fugitive former general to the U.N. war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

"The opening of accession negotiations is postponed" until Croatia is "cooperating fully" with the tribunal where Gen. Ante Gotovina faces a war crimes trial, said Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, who chaired the EU meeting.

The membership talks were to have opened Thursday. The foreign ministers set a new date. Asselborn stressed "the EU's door is open for Croatia" and said entry talks can open on short notice if Croatia works "harder than has been the case so far" to cooperate with the war crimes tribunal to bring Gotovina to justice.

Syrian agents withdraw from Beirut

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Syrian military intelligence agents abandoned their Beirut office Wednesday, ending their 18-year presence in the Lebanese capital by driving away in buses and cars.

The withdrawal was in line with international demands — including the United States and the United Nations — and the Lebanese opposition.

Intelligence agents and officers left in two buses and several sedans shortly before noon. A checkpoint outside the head office was removed and the sentry post at the entrance of the compound, which included offices and homes for Syrian officers, was demolished shortly before they left.

From The Associated Press

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A visitor stands in front of a picture of death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Israel dedicates new Holocaust museum

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said Wednesday that Jerusalem's new Holocaust memorial is a place of deep shame for all Germans, because his country will remain forever linked to the Nazi genocide of six million Jews.

Fischer and some 40 other world leaders attended a second day of ceremonies and educational conferences to mark the opening of the \$56 million museum, which tells the story of the Holocaust from the victims' viewpoint through personal testimonies and artifacts.

Speakers, including those from Israel, said there was a rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, and promised to battle racism.

Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski said he would try to preserve the memory of the Polish Jewish community that was nearly obliterated by the Nazis, and French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said his government would stand strong against anti-Semitism.

New York Mayor Michael

Bloomberg urged all "as citizens of the world, to never forget."

Fischer, a frequent visitor to Israel, said that the Holocaust museum "is a place of deep shame for any country because the name of my Germany, Germany, is and will forever be inseparably linked to the Shoah, the ultimate crime against humanity."

"The Shoah... will forever remain an indelible part of German history," he said, using the Hebrew name for the Holocaust.

To give a human dimension to Holocaust statistics, some 90 personal stories are woven into the museum's displays, which also feature some 280 works of art.

Underground galleries on either side of a 600-foot central walkway guide visitors through the history of Adolf Hitler's Final Solution: prewar life, anti-Semitic laws, roundups, deportations, mass executions, death camps.

"For the benefit of the past, but also for a future that has to be free of xenophobia [and] racism, we, the Polish people, believe it's very important not to lose the memory of our Jewish brothers and sisters," Kwasniewski said.

ElBaradei: Terrorists must not obtain nuclear weapons

The Associated Press

LONDON — World leaders must do more to stop terrorists from obtaining nuclear or radioactive material they could use in a devastating attack, the head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog warned Wednesday.

There is a small chance that international terrorists could steal and launch a nuclear weapon, causing horrific casualties, said Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, opening a three-day conference on nuclear security.

Less devastating but more likely, terrorists could obtain radioactive material and pack it into "dirty bomb" with conventional explosives, ElBaradei said. Terrorists intent on causing panic and mass casualties also could sabotage a nuclear plant or transport, he said.

ElBaradei said there had been more than 650 confirmed inci-

dents of trafficking of nuclear or other radioactive material in recent years, demonstrating that security of such materials must be improved.

Nations also must work harder to track radioactive material and fund international efforts to boost security at nuclear facilities and of systems for detecting nuclear materials that are being transported.

Former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, now co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative group, said the world was not doing enough to prevent a catastrophic nuclear or radioactive attack.

"The threats are outrunning our response," he said.

Nunn said the greatest dangers were that terrorists could steal highly enriched uranium and build a nuclear bomb, or take radioactive material to build a "dirty bomb."

He also said there was a danger of many new nations obtaining nu-

clear weapons, heightening tensions and increasing the risk of a nuclear accident or theft by terrorists.

Linton Brooks, the administrator of the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration, said that America was working hard and cooperating with allies to secure dangerous materials at home and overseas.

Nuclear weapons, he said, tended in most countries to be better guarded than civilian facilities. "It's not easy, but it's as not as hard as it should be" for terrorists to get hold of material they could use to make a crude nuclear bomb, Brooks said.

Radioactive material that could be packed into a "dirty bomb" is far harder to protect because it's scattered in many types of facilities. "There are so many isotopes in so many places," he said.

Dangerous radioactive material has many civilian uses, including medical diagnosis and treatment equipment.

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Billionaire's vacation

GRENOBLE, France — The billionaire boss of the Samsung conglomerate, Lee Kun-hee, is treating himself to the dream ski vacation, renting three runs all to himself at the French Alpine resort of Courchevel, resort management said Wednesday.

Lee has rented the runs for three weeks, starting Thursday, said Claude Faure, director of the Three Valleys firm that manages the ski area. Netting will separate Lee's area from other parts of the resort.

EU divorce rules

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Commission said Monday it plans to draw up new laws clarifying divorce rules for mixed-nationality couples within the 25-nation bloc.

The commission did not provide figures on the scale of the problem, but said that in Germany alone about 30,000 couples with partners of different nationalities divorce every year.

Book called prejudicial

VATICAN CITY — If you're not among the millions who have already read "The Da Vinci Code," an Italian cardinal has a plea for you: Don't read it and don't buy it.

Genoa Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone told Vatican news on Tuesday the runaway success of author Dan Brown's novel is proof of "anti-Catholic" prejudice.

Bertone has been mentioned as a possible successor to Pope John Paul II.

Public hanging in Iran

PAKDHASH, Iran — An young man convicted of raping and murdering 16 boys was lashed 100 times, and then hanged Wednesday in front of a large, angry crowd who pelted him with stones and scuffled with police.

Mohammed Bijeh, 23, confessed in court to raping and murdering the children. Approximately 5,000 spectators — including women and children — gathered to watch the flogging and hanging.

From The Associated Press

Euro continues to make some suspicious

Europeans aware of currency's travel benefits, but believe prices are hiked

BY ROBERT WIELAARD

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Since entering circulation in 2002, the euro has simplified travel and shopping across borders, but many Europeans blame it for higher prices — even though there is no proof of that, EU Monetary Affairs Commissioner Joaquin Almunia said Monday.

"While the [inflationary] impact was, at worst, marginal, this is not how consumers in some countries see it," he said at a con-

ference on the effect the euro has had on consumers in the 12 EU nations using the currency.

Almunia said Europeans expected three key benefits from the euro: stable prices, no more converting of national currencies and the ability to compare prices at home with those elsewhere in the EU.

"So far, there is no evidence of any significant effect of the introduction of the euro" on narrowing price gaps between EU states for the same goods, he said. "This is something that we will only really see the benefits of over the medium term."

Almunia said Europeans are "very aware" of the benefits of the euro when traveling. More than 54 percent of euro-zone citizens traveling outside the area take euros as their main currency, while 15 percent take dollars, he said.

Since banks now charge the same fees for foreign and domestic payments, consumers have gained "considerably from the introduction of the euro in terms of simpler, cheaper foreign transactions not only when they travel within the euro area," he said.

While statistical data shows the European Central Bank has been successful in creating price stability within a euro-zone nation, Almunia acknowledged that many Europeans disagree.

"Public opinion in certain countries still holds the view that prices rose with the advent of the euro," he said.

This "mistaken belief" is most popular in the 10 nations that joined the EU last May, he said, and where "71 percent of people are afraid of abusive price rises and cheating" when their nations join the euro in the future.

Sweden proposes cutting alcohol tax by 30 percent

The Associated Press

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — With increased private alcohol imports crippling the state liquor monopoly, the government on Wednesday proposed to cut taxes on beer and wine by 30 percent next year.

The proposal, which also included several measures to curb teenage drinking, was the final part of a planned sweeping reform of the country's alcohol policy. In August, a 40 percent tax cut on hard liquor was also proposed. The parliament is expected to vote on the proposal later this year.

Prices at the state-run Systembolaget stores are among Europe's highest and sales have fallen sharply since nearby Estonia

joined the European Union and neighboring Denmark and Finland slashed their alcohol prices.

In 2004, one-third of the beer — and 70 percent of the hard liquor — consumed in the country was purchased abroad, said Kent Haerstedt, a lawmaker who presented the plan.

In southern Sweden, people visit stores in Denmark and Finland, where the government slashed alcohol prices by as much as 33 percent.

Also, an increasing number of Swedes are taking "booze cruises" to Estonia to buy cheap vodka.

While Sweden has long prided itself on using high alcohol taxes as a way of controlling consumption, the mass exodus of consum-



Kent Haerstedt

ers is forcing the government to rethink its strategy, Haerstedt said.

The proposal also included raising the drinking age in bars and restaurants from 18 to 20.

Haerstedt's proposal was met with mixed reviews, as some said the tax decrease would only increase alcohol consumption.

Report finds most Europeans criticize immigration in EU

BY SUSANNA LOOF

The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — A sweeping new European Union report suggested Tuesday that two-thirds of Europeans believe multiculturalism has reached a breaking point and that many people on the continent harbor critical views of immigrants.

The analysis of surveys in 28 countries, commissioned by the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, said that concerns already raised by some European politicians that the identity of individual countries is at risk because of immigration.

"It's about fears and insecurity of one's own position in society," said Beate Winkler, director of the Vienna-based agency.

During the six years the surveys were carried out, there was "a very significant increase" in the proportion of Europeans who

believe multicultural society has reached its limit, said John Wrench, the agency's head of research. "About two out of three respondents subscribed to this view," he said.

The share of people supporting policies that would send legal migrants back to their home countries also had increased significantly, with one in five supporting such policies in 2003, he added. The study did not quantify by how much that support had increased.

In Greece, where the highest resistance to diversity was recorded, almost 85 percent said they viewed minorities as a collective threat. In Sweden, that figure was just under 33 percent, the lowest among the countries studied.

Winkler warned against painting too dark a picture of European attitudes, instead emphasizing a conclusion that almost eight in 10 Europeans said they had no problems in interacting with minorities. That indicates that their "concrete experience" in dealing with minorities is much better than the perception they pick up in media and elsewhere, she said. She also pointed out that the study says nothing about racist and prejudiced behavior, only about attitudes.

Four countries could help reduce prejudice in Europe, she said: clear political leadership, legal measures targeting discrimination, promotion of education, and fair media reports on the issue.

The report analyzed the results of polls gathered through the Eurobarometer and European Social Survey, both linked to the EU.

The Eurobarometer used a sample of 1,000 people in most countries, while the European Social Survey used a sample ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 people. No margins of error were given.

Two-thirds of Europeans believe multiculturalism has reached a breaking point.

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OPINION

Jackson's approach to trial is out of this world

BY LEONARD PITTS JR.

The Miami Herald

I was in Michael Jackson's bedroom once.

This was long enough ago that he still had brown skin and God's intended nose. Contrary to the allegations that have surfaced in his child molestation trial, Jackson offered me neither "Jesus Juice" nor pornography. I remember only a rattan chair and shelves full of movie memorabilia, including Disney, the Three Stooges and a likeness of Jackson himself as the scarecrow from "The Wiz." His room was the last stop on a tour of the family home in the L.A. suburb of Encino following an interview.

To get inside the Jackson compound, you spoke your name into an electronic box and a heavy black gate swung ponderously open. You drove down a long driveway past a pen where fearsome guard dogs were caged. "Act like you're going to attack me," Jackson said as he pointed them out to me. I obediently lifted a fist and took a step in his direction only to become a mannequin as the dogs hurred themselves against the fence, barking and slavering. As I was concentrating on bladder control, Jackson doubled over, laughing.

He was a free creature, insubstantial as smoke, who slouched about the house as if bored of existence itself. The life he described in that whisper-soft voice of his was lonely, isolated and sad. He complained of being unable to go beyond the gates for fear of being mobbed. Still, he confided, he

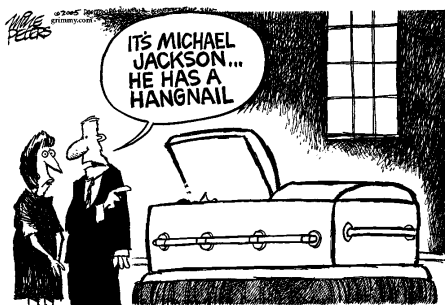
slipped out sometimes late at night and walked the streets, looking for someone to talk to. I was never sure about that story until years later when a man I knew told me how he'd been driving near the Jackson home one night when who should he see but Michael, walking alone.

I left the Jackson home feeling vaguely sorry for the family's most famous son, feeling that here was a guy who was not of us, a pitiful man who desperately needed a guide to instruct him in how things are done here on planet Earth.

It's a feeling that returned in force last Thursday when I saw him arrive at court for his trial wearing pajama bottoms.

Jackson, for the three of you who missed it, turned up AWOL when testimony was set to resume. The singer's attorneys explained that Jackson, suffering severe back pain, had been taken to the hospital earlier that morning. An infuriated Judge Rodney Melville threatened to revoke the singer's \$3 million bail and slap him in jail. He gave Jackson an hour to get his court papers. The singer, disheveled, hobbling in apparent pain and clutching his jamnuts, showed up an hour and three minutes later.

Now work with me here. You're Michael Jackson. You're on trial on charges that could send you away for 20 years. You have already backed off the judge by showing up late for an earlier court appearance, dancing on top of an SUV, and forcing jury selection to be held up for a week while you are hospitalized with the flu. From here on out, aren't you going to make every effort not to tee the



man off any more? Yes, you would. Me too. I can't cure my back unless I have to lean on a cane, if I have to be rolled in a chair, if I have to be carried by my bodyguard, if I have to be wheeled into court on a gurney, popping painkillers like M&Ms, my body would be present and accounted for when the session was gavelled to order.

That's how every ordinary human does things on Planet Earth. But that's a place Jackson has not lived for a very long time. He has been working since he was 5, famous since

he was 11, sequestered behind gates since shortly thereafter.

Moreover, he has spent his life surrounded by flunkies who follow his orders, shape his environment to his tastes and say yes a lot. I doubt he can even remember the last time someone could tell him what to do. So what does he know about having to be governed by someone else's orders? What does he know about Earth? Nothing, that's what.

But if he's not very careful, Jackson will soon have 20 years to learn.

When the going gets tough, make room for Daddy

BY ALFRED LUBRANO

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Oh, it's tender, really. Government big shots suddenly decide to ditch fabulous careers because, darn it all, they've missed too many of little Billy's school plays.

They claim to anyone who'll listen: "I'm leaving to spend more time with my family."

It's the beautiful American lie, perfect for its homely sentiment and apparent courage.

Embattled Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell needs to see more of his family, and will begin hanging with them this week.

There are others: former embattled CIA Director George Tenet, former embattled Environmental Protection Agency head Christie Whitman, former embattled FBI Director Louis Freeh, and many, many more.

When the going gets tough, the tough go home.

You would think that the American family would be in better shape than it is, given all the people who drop out of jobs that feature limos and White House access just to play Boggle on a Wednesday night with Junior. Never mind that in many cases Junior is now 45.

No one just comes out and says, "I've been a cold-war-shielded and marginized colleague with me dead, and the president is setting my desk on fire."

Now, "quitting for the family" can be enshrined among other classic mendacities of

our culture, like "No, that doesn't make you look fat" and "It's not you, it's me."

Truth is, Powell is pilloried by both the left and the right, and leaving seems smart. Whitman was being assailed by the Bush administration for, it appears, not dismantling the environment fast enough, and Freeh was taking hits for FBI missteps.

And by coyly declaring that he would step down from running the largest spy network in Earth history to "learn how to instant-message" his son's friends, Tenet avoided revisiting his "slam-dunk" guarantee that Iraq was lousy with humanitarian-cancelling bombs.

Some of the oddest people play the family card, such as Bernard Kerik, the former New York City po-

lice commissioner who'd been nominated for secretary of homeland security. He withdrew from consideration for the post, then quickly departed the Rudy Giuliani-run consulting firm at which he worked, to — here comes a surprise — spend more time with his peeps.

Cunny, he didn't mention the media's hounding him about his alleged connections to mobbed-up people and about the extramarital affairs he was reportedly conducting with two women.

Which family, by the way, was he going to be spending more time with?

To complete the hypocrisy, some of these family-missing folks get home, invest a few nights reuniting with the cat, then speed out of the house faster than you can say, "Wasn't it your turn to take the kids to soccer practice, Mr. Secretary?"

After leaving the FBI, Freeh signed on as a senior executive at MBNA Corp., the giant Wilmington, Del.-based credit-card

issuer. Freeh is responsible for 26,000 people in four countries, a burden that might cut into one or two pizza nights with his six sons.

John Danforth quit as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations to spend more days with his wife, then immediately rejoined his old law firm, announcing that he wouldn't rule out public service.

People should come up with more honest — or at least original — things to say about quitting.

I'm leaving my job to:

■ order hookers and room service for seven weeks until the pain this job inflicted ebbs;

■ join the Carmelite nuns (I hear they're nice);

■ learn how to properly start a fire the Boy Scout way; and

■ cash in on my public service by pulling down more money than God and Oprah.

BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Mallard Fillmore



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Hospitals fight order

IL CHICAGO — Four hospitals are resisting demands by Gov. Rod Blagojevich to shut down their medical waste incinerators. The hospitals are indicating they should be paid to recoup the cost of complying with air pollution laws. Last fall, Blagojevich backed community activists urging that the trash burners be shut down.

Spill on slots

FL MIAMI — New Las Vegas-style slot machines were given the thumbs up for four betting sites in Broward County, but neighboring Miami-Dade County narrowly rejected a similar proposal.

The decision in Broward County clears the way for slot machines at two horse-racing tracks, one greyhound track and one jai alai site. The Miami-Dade plan would have allowed slots at three locations in the county.

The Broward proposal passed 57 percent to 43 percent, while the Miami-Dade plan received 47 percent of the vote.

Hit-and-run kills widow

NY ROME — An 84-year-old widow was killed by a hit-and-run driver in central New York as she walked from a hospital to her parked car, according to police. Mary LoRusso had been visiting a cousin who was a patient. She was struck before 7 p.m. in the drive-through area near Rome Memorial Hospital's emergency room exit, police said. She was found hurt and told hospital personnel, who brought her inside and attempted to save her, Detective Commander Edward Stevens said.

Own gun shoots boy, 7

OH COLUMBUS — A gun in a bookbag discharged in an elementary school classroom and the primary school student who brought it was shot in the hand, police said.

The injury to the 7-year-old was not believed to be life-threatening. Police were uncertain why the gun went off.

Columbus schools did not cancel classes, but some parents took their children from Leasow Elementary School. There were 15 children in class when the .45-caliber pistol gun went off, police Sgt. David Scilian said.

The boy's mother "indicated she had no idea where the weapon came from," Scilian said.

State drinking problem

ND MANDAN — A recent study from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health found more than 31 percent of North Dakotans age 12 and older said they had five or more drinks in one sitting during the month before the survey done in 2002 and 2003. The national average for binge drinking was 23 percent.

Binge use is defined as having five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the last 30 days.

Bartender Laura Thompson, who owns the Old Town Tavern in Mandan with her husband, Roger, chuckled at that definition. She said nearly everyone in the bar's weekly dart league



would easily meet the criteria. Nearly 55 percent of North Dakotans between the ages of 18 and 25 reported binge drinking. About 17 percent who were ages 12 to 17 and about 28 percent in the 26- and older category said they had five or more drinks in one sitting.

North Dakota's 11 percent rate of alcohol dependence and abuse also led the nation in the study.

Drug side effects tallied

DC WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration received more than 422,500 reports of drug side effects last year, a record, the agency said.

Final figures won't be available until spring but the preliminary estimate was confirmed by spokeswoman Laura Alvey.

That tops the 370,887 reports of what the agency calls "adverse events" in 2003.

Agency officials attribute the rise to increased use of prescription drugs rather than an increase in risk from the drugs.

Drug makers are required to tell the agency any instances of side effects reported to them and FDA also hears directly from patients and physicians.

Nurse admits to theft

PA CARLISLE — A nurse pleaded guilty to stealing more than \$25,000 from residents of the Lower Allen Township retirement community where she worked.

Mary Louise Ross, 47, pleaded guilty to one count of theft by deception before Cumberland County Judge Kevin A. Hess. She remained in Dauphin County Prison.



Wearing of the grin
Mark Floyd, 6, of Baltimore sports a toothless grin and his Irish green as he marches with his grandmother in Baltimore's St. Patrick's Day parade.

on a parole violation for a 1992 crime.

Ross stole credit card information and checks from two residents of the Bethany Village retirement community from August to November 2001 and forged checks that she made payable to herself and businesses in her name, Senior Assistant District Attorney Michelle Sibert said.

Sprucing up lagoon

HI HONOLULU — Work could begin soon on a \$5 million project to restore the neglected saltwater lagoon at the Hilo Hawaiian Village in Waikiki. Hotel officials say they plan to make the 50-year-old man-made lagoon shallower, smaller and cleaner.

They also plan to install a public boardwalk around it.

These patients don't cry

ID POCATELLO — Doctors at Portneuf Medical Center recently found themselves treating an additional 770 patients — all dolls and stuffed animals.

The annual Teddy Bear Clinic drew a record turnout of children, who brought their dolls, teddy bears and other stuffed animals in need of medical attention. The event was aimed at making a visit to the hospital less frightening for children.

"It's like they are the parent. They get to experience it from the other side," hospital spokeswoman Crista Madsen Smith said.

Children explain their animal's problems to a receptionist while checking the toy in. Officials reported stories like "My bear broke his leg by jumping on the bed" or "My sister bit him."

The children also helped doctors decide how to treat the toys. "X-ray is popular," Smith said. "Casting was probably the most popular this year, but surgery is always fascinating to kids."

Heli-mushing is out

AK ANCHORAGE — The Bureau of Land Management ended plans for a heli-mushing camp on the Nenana Glacier near Denali National Park and Preserve this summer. Era Aviation anticipated shuttling as many as 3,000 tourists to and from the glacier for sled dog rides. However, strong opposition arose from residents concerned about increased helicopter traffic and noise.

Bringing history alive

NV SPARKS — A gala marking Sparks' 100 years as a city will be held at the Sparks Heritage Museum. Plans called for a Pony Express rider to arrive at the museum with a proclamation from Gov. Kenny Guinn. Dr. Michael Fisher will portray Gov. John Sparks, the city's namesake.

Watching the streets

TN NASHVILLE — The Nashville Police Department is going to use a network of surveillance cameras to monitor activities in areas with high crime rates, including downtown nightspots. Memphis installed a dozen cameras in the mid-1990s, but canceled the program because of technical problems.



When seagulls attack From left, Heather Burnside, 18; Nikki Strickland, 19; and Julie Bishop, 18, all of Jonesboro, Ark., are mobbed by seagulls as they feed them at Gulf State Park beach in Gulf Shores, Ala. The three are on spring break from William Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark.



What dogs dream about Katy, a border collie-Australian shepherd mix, chases a radio-control motorcycle driven by owner Kevin Puntigam of Roseburg, Ore., at Stewart Park in Rosburg.



Skater boy Christopher Sabo, 3, wears skates on his hands after warmer temperatures made the ice too slushy for skating at the Oxford Youth Association rink in Oxford, N.J.



Containing a garage fire

A firefighter prepares to fight a fire consuming an attached garage of a house in Worcester, Vt. Firefighters from five departments battled the fire, saving the house from major damage and rescuing a family cat. No one was hurt.



Shake your tailfeathers

An Eastern wild turkey tom fans his tailfeathers as he and his two hens cross a rural road near Superior, Wis.



Birthday battle

Civil War re-enactors with the 2nd U.S. Infantry, Company C, foreground, fire on Confederate re-enactors of the 30th North Carolina, Infantry Company K, during Living History Day at The Museum of the Waxhaws in Waxhaw, N.C. Living History Day celebrates President Andrew Jackson's birth on March 15, 1767, in the area.

Justice finally served

PA HARRISBURG — A man who killed his wife in 1969 pleaded guilty to walking away from prison while on furlough 30 years ago.

Allen D. Marshall, 63, was captured in Houston a year ago and brought back to Pennsylvania to finish serving his five- to 10-year sentence for voluntary manslaughter.

Marshall entered his plea under a 1973 prison breach charge, which carries a stiffer punishment than a prison-escape charge would today, said Cumberland County First Assistant District Attorney David Freed. He could face up to 10 more years for walking away from the prison when he is sentenced in May.

Alleged porn ring

TX DALLAS — A Colorado adult entertainment business owner and two Arlington residents face federal charges accusing them of participating in a multi-million dollar operation that illegally distributed pornography and reported profits to avoid paying taxes.

Edward Wedelstedt, 62, of the Denver area, was accused of running a criminal enterprise in 18 states through his company, Goalie Entertainment Holdings Inc., and conspiring to defraud the government by not reporting large sums of cash income.

Two Arlington residents, Leroy Moore Sr., 64, and Beverly Kay Van Dusen, 46, were accused of conspiring to sell porn at Dallas-area stores and paying a percentage of revenues back to Wedelstedt's company.

A 23-count indictment alleged Goalie Entertainment managed bookstores that sold pornographic magazines, videos and products in the front and showed sexually explicit movies in back rooms to customers who purchased tokens.

Using their resources

HI HONOLULU — Lawmakers on Monday advanced a measure that would ease the way for a technology that uses cold water piped from the depths of the Pacific Ocean to cool Hawaii's tropical heat.

Known as seawater air conditioning, the method of cooling could reduce the state's dependency on fossil fuels by bringing down electricity needs, according to the state Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, which supports the bill. Members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Business Concerns voted to pass the measure, which would exempt seawater air conditioning projects from public utility regulation.

Because the companies would not be the only providers of a service essential to public health and welfare, they do not need oversight from the public utilities commission, John Cole, executive director of the Division of Consumer Advocacy, said.

Singing a proud tune

MO KANSAS CITY — Mike Hendricks is hoping he can make his hometown sing a different tune.

Hendricks was baffled to learn

"Kansas City," the 1950s ditty that goes, "I'm goin' to Kansas City — Kansas City here I come," was not his city's official song.

So the Kansas City Star writer did what any columnist would do to stir up change — he started slinging ink.

In recent months, his columns on correcting the oversight have caught the city's attention. The effort has even received the blessing of Mike Stoller and Jerry Leibler, the songwriters who penned the song in 1951.

This month, the newspaper and city planners will start a campaign to make the song the town's definitive golden olie.

A bright future in steel

MS COLUMBUS — Gov. Haley Barbour signed a bill containing financial incentives to lure a steel mill to the state.

A company called SteelCorr wants to break ground this month on a mill to manufacture automotive-grade steel. The plant is supposed to create 450 jobs paying an average of \$70,000 a year.

Navajo gambling

AZ WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr. cleared the way for gambling at five tribal chapters by taking no action on legislation passed by the tribal council. The council voted 59-14 last month for a proposal to legalize gambling in the Shiprock, Hogeback and Huelito chapters in New Mexico and the Nahata Dził and Leupp chapters in Arizona.

Voting problems alleged

MD ROCKVILLE — A review of voting machines used in Maryland's most populous county for the November elections found that 7 percent of the machines had problems such as frozen screens or failed to boot.

An additional 5 percent in Montgomery County had vote tallies that were considerably lower than other machines used in the same precincts, causing election officials to deem them "suspect," according to the report. It was drafted by the county in December for the local election board.

But state officials doubted those figures, saying a review of the county's machines conducted by the state and the equipment's manufacturer showed that only 0.4 percent had significant problems in the Nov. 3 election.

4 killed at bus stop

NV LAS VEGAS — An SUV jumped the curb and plowed into a bench at a municipal bus stop, killing four people and scattering bodies, broken glass and schoolbooks.

The driver was jailed on suspicion of driving under the influence, police said.

The Ford Explorer skidded along a concrete wall about 10 miles from the Las Vegas Strip and demolished the bench on which the victims were sitting, police said. "Basically the bench is attached to the cement wall," Sgt. Chris Jones said. "There was no place for them to go."

The victims were not immediately identified but appeared to be in their teens, Jones said.

Stories and photos from wire services



ripes travel

Cork's cultural

Title brings new look and events to Irish city

BY PHILIP WATSON
The Guardian

Walk around Ireland's second city and you'll soon spot someone wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "The People's Republic of Cork."

Most T-shirts sport the city's red and white colors. Some have pictures of Lenin, Che Guevara and Irish Republican leader and County Cork hero, Michael Collins. On others, the name of the self-proclaimed republic is written in Gaelic.

It's a playful declaration of independence, yet it perfectly embodies the city's rebel spirit and nonconformist zeal. Corkonians have always stood in opposition to external rule (whether it be from London or Dublin). Ask pugnaic soccer star Roy Keane where he's from and he'll reply, "Cork first, then Ireland."

But the city has another side. Having won the European Capital of Culture designation for 2005, city authorities have conducted an extensive civic improvement scheme and scheduled more than 5,000 events.

The city's main thoroughfare, St. Patrick's Street, has been given an extreme makeover with smart new pavements and theatrical street lighting designed by Catalan architect Beth Gali. The effect on the look and flow of pedestrians has been so marked that the Irish Times recently waxed lyrical about the street being Cork's equivalent to Barcelona's Ramblas.

If you go for a visit, there are a few sights not to be missed. Cork's most notable landmark is St Anne's Church, built in 1722 on a hill above the city. Climb the narrow stone steps carved inside the 7-foot-thick steeply walls to a parapet that has 360-degree views of the city. Visitors are encouraged to play the church's eight bells — cards mark out tunes on numbered bell ropes. Great fun.

The city jail on Convent Avenue is an eerily beautiful 19th-century prison, which, in its 100-year history, has seen executions, rough justice and the imprisonment of Irish Republican soldiers.



Music is everywhere this year in Cork, named a 2005 "European Capital of Culture." Here, part-time musician Stephen Hunter strums on the street for donations.

The English Market on Princes Street/Grand Parade dates from 1788 and has traders selling the best local foods from stalls under high-vaulted ceilings. The long, bounteous counter at Kay O'Connell's fishmonger's is perhaps the star attraction.

Also not to be missed: An Irish pub, Bodega, on Cornmarket Street, is in a large, open-plan converted warehouse, with white-washed walls, tall mirrors, wooden floors and exposed beams. Disc jockeys play in the evenings, there's a weekend club space and good food. Great for weekend brunches.

Sin É, pronounced "shin-ay" and meaning "that's it," is at 8 Coburg St. and is the best place in town for traditional Irish music, either in the corner of the old, dark and atmospheric ground floor bar or in the brighter upstairs lounge. Great selection of local brews. Next door is The Corner House, which also has live Irish music, plus folk and blues nights.

Cork's trendiest bar, Rhino Rooms, at 1 Castle St., is a tiny, semi-circular space with leather bench seats, chrome bar stools, a large 1970s pattern light box on



PETER JAGGER/Stars and Stripes

one wall, and "funk, soul and ambient grooves."

The Castle Inn on South Main Street has a snug front room, limeoak floor, heavily nicotined-stained walls, Double Diamond light shades and frosted glass doors. It is like stepping into a splendid old pub in the Irish countryside. Unchanged for more than 50 years, it is the perfect antidote to the homogeneous super-pubs that are taking over the city.

Blarney and its castle are just six miles from the city and worth a trip. Head to the high-walled medieval castle with its famous Blarney Stone, which visitors kiss by lying on their backs, and stretching out over the battlements. Admission is 6 euros for adults and 2.50 for children.

Just 18 miles along the coast from Cork, Kinsale is a pretty harbour town renowned for its narrow streets, historic pubs, fine sailing and gourmet restaurants, the best of which is the popular Fishy Fishy Cafe, which serves superb locally caught seafood with great wines to match.

The Victorian seaside resort of Cobh (pronounced "cove") may have seen better days, but it's well worth a visit for its promenade, sea views and the excellent Queenstown Story exhibition at the Heritage Centre. The exhibit tells the town harbor's long history of leaving: from convicts transported to Australia to Irish emigrants forced by famine to head for the US. This was also the Titanic's last port of call. Admission is 5 euros for adults, 2.50 children.



The indoor market hall in Cork is a shopping center for fresh produce, meats and seafood.

Coming up in Cork

With a population of 123,000, Cork is the smallest city to be named European Capital of Culture. Keeping to this small scale, the organizers have tried to promote free events, many in public spaces and unconventional sites.

Some upcoming events:

- **March 25-28:** European Quarter Week, celebrating 250 years of the art form.
- **Spring to autumn:** "Eighteen Turns," Daniel Liebeskind's twisting pavilion commissioned by London's Serpentine Gallery in 2001, will stand in Fitzgerald Park.
- **May 9-25:** Ocean to City, Ireland's largest and most participatory rowing race.
- **May-July:** "Forty Shades of Green," looking at the work of 40 artists.
- **June 21-Sept. 3:** The Rory Gallagher Exhibition, a celebration of the blues and rock guitar icon and Cork hero.
- **Summer:** "Monte Notte," Collaboration between actor Fiona Shaw and multimedia artist Dorothy Cross, both of whom were born in Cork.
- **Autumn:** World premiere of a play by acclaimed writer/director Neil LaBute.
- **Oct. 16-23:** 50th Cork Film Festival, focusing on retrospective and short films.
- **Oct. 28-31:** Cork Jazz Festival, one of Europe's best-loved.
- **All year:** "Exodus," Sebastião Salgado's haunting photographs from his renowned Migrations and Children.

— THE GUARDIAN

Irish Tourist Board

A narrow road along Tranter's Bay is an example of the miles and miles of coastline in County Donegal.



Going coastal

For miles of craggy cliffs, try Ireland's County Donegal

BY RICHARD C. LEWIS

Associated Press

We had traveled to County Donegal. But it just didn't fit what I pictured Ireland to be. The expanses of lush, green fields were nowhere to be seen; instead, tall, imposing ridges rose alongside the narrow roads we traveled, giving the countryside a brooding feel. People here revel in their separateness. After all, the county's motto is "Up here, it's different."

There's a reason: Geographically, Donegal is almost completely cut off from the rest of the republic, a three-hour drive from the closest airport, Shannon, to the south. But it's that rugged, unspoiled landscape and the laid-back, welcoming attitude of the people that make this part of Ireland so charming, and an inviting destination for the adventurous tourist.

Most don't know that Donegal has more coastline than any other Irish county, and usually there's no one there but you. It also boasts Slieve League, the highest sea cliffs in Europe at nearly 2,000 feet above the ocean.

Being a sucker for grand vistas, I had decided months before that Michelle and I would make it to this spot (it means Gray Mountain) in southwest Donegal. With our friend's wedding in mind, I had an extra incentive: I planned to propose to her there. That is, if I could only find the place. I muttered to myself as I nervously negotiated the tight turns in our rental car, trying to make sense of the signs, some of which were only in Gaelic.

A clerk at the federal court in Rhode Island, of Irish extraction



Tourists enjoy the bluffs of the Giant's Causeway on the Antrim Coast in northern Ireland.

and a regular visitor, had told me the cliffs would be hard to find.

"Follow the road, and you'll come to a sheep gate. Open it, and drive on through," he said. "A sheep gate?" I asked. "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, it seems strange," replied the clerk, Francis McCabe. "But it'll be worth it."

Boy, was he right. We found the sheep gate, parked the car in a dirt lot and carefully closed it behind us. I knew this was the right place soon after we began walking. Clods of pale green peat stuck to our shoes. The gray, rocky bluffs rolled before us, and dropped off into nothingness. The North Atlantic lay beyond. A fishing trawler passed near the shore. In the mist, it seemed like a ghost ship. I dropped to my knee and proposed.

Yes, the Cliffs of Moher — a famous stretch of coastline in Ireland's southwest County Clare — are spectacular. But they beckon for solitude, to enjoy

alone. I found it hard to soak in the scenery with hordes of tourists barking in my ear. We had no such problem at Slieve League. It was just us and the sheep. There were no signs, no cliffside fences, and nobody around.

At the top, we ventured to the bluff's edge and peered down. The wind slapped at our faces as we watched the deep-blue water pound the cliff's side, churning the basin into a white froth. Sea gulls swooped in circles below us, buffeted by the winds. We listened to the echoing roar of the water, and the gulls' call.

The next day we drove across the border to Northern Ireland. Before, the crossing would have required a screening by British soldiers, but nowadays it's hassle-free, thanks to the largely successful peace process of the past decade.

We soon arrived at Giant's Causeway, a bizarre geological creation and a United Nations

World Heritage site along the coast. From the bluffs above, the dark rocks jut into the ocean, as if a giant had clubbed the cliff and the fragments had rolled into piles in the water. Up close, the formation is a tightly packed cluster of columns in perfect hexagonal shapes, as if chiseled by some mythological artisan. In fact, it consists of 40,000 black basalt columns formed when molten lava washed over the land some 6 million years ago, and hardened.

We watched as children hopped from one column to another, as if they were playing on a real-life Lego set. The waves crashed around them, and they shouted with glee as the spray swept over them. Beware, though: the rocks can be slippery and are downright treacherous where they meet the tide.

Nearby is the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. The 3-foot-wide wooden plank hangs about 80 feet above a cove. The rope bridge leads to a small island.

From Giant's Causeway, we followed the road eastward as it hugged the coastline. On this day, the ocean looked like a blue dress, the whitecaps like sparkling sequins. We inched down one side road as it descended precariously to the water's edge. Gnarly trees hung to the side of the road, their leafless branches bent sideways by the unrelenting wind. Typically, the road led to a sheep gate, and ended at a farmhouse. No one was home, and fearing we were trespassing, we left.

We turned inland, and made our way to Belfast. The hustle and bustle of urbanity was awaiting, and a pint of Guinness or two. We were leaving the remoteness behind.

If you go

Getting there

Donegal County is most easily reached by car. We flew into Shannon Airport, rented a car and drove the 181 miles to Donegal. All you need is a map to follow the coastal roads. Be careful, as the roads are narrow and have no shoulders; curves come with little warning. Driving is on the left in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Attractions

- **Slieve League:** From Donegal town, take N56 west to Bruckless. Take N263 to Kilcar and Carrick/An Charraig, then watch for signs: www.donedgaldirect.ie or phone (+353) (0) 74-972-1148.
- **Giant's Causeway:** On the north coast of Northern Ireland. From the Donegal area, take the A2 road along the coast to Coleraine, Portstewart and Portrush, then follow signs; www.derryvisitor.com or phone (+44) (0)7126-7284.

Information

- **On Donegal:** Go to the Web at www.goreland.com.
- **On Giant's Causeway and the coast of Northern Ireland:** www.geographia.com/northern-ireland/ukiant01.htm.

— THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

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Keukenhof: For t

BY LORI ANN MARTIN
Stripes Travel reader

Nothing says "spring" quite like the flowers of the season, and nothing says "flowers" quite like Keukenhof garden in Lisse, Netherlands, open for eight weeks beginning March 24.

All of the old favorites and some new surprises can be found within the 80 acres filled with more than 6 million bulbs, which each spring turn into blooming tulips, fragrant hyacinths and a variety of daffodils, just to name a few. They come in every color of the rainbow and spread along wide, paved paths.

Small brooks and fountains bubble quietly, while swans glide over the large lake at the center of the garden. Blooming trees hang over the walkways and rare white peacocks wander over the manicured lawn.

A small petting zoo holds sheep, baby pigs and unusual varieties of poultry. Elsewhere on the garden grounds are play areas and children's activities so young ones can run off extra energy.

Outside the garden are large bulb fields with solid strips of color that can be seen from the veranda of the Keukenhof windmill.

Besides the outdoor extravaganza, there are 10 indoor exhibitions that change throughout the season, featuring flowers such as amaryllis, orchids, gerbera daisies and perennials.

Shops within the garden sell summer bulbs certified for different countries and provide ordering for spring bulbs that are mailed in time to be planted in the autumn.

The spring spectacular of Keukenhof began in 1949 as an initiative of the mayor of Lisse and

If you go

• **When:** Keukenhof is open 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. March 24 through May 20. Ticket offices close at 6 p.m.

• **Where:** Keukenhof is on the outskirts of Lisse, Netherlands, between The Hague (Den Haag) and Amsterdam. From The Hague, take A-44 toward Amsterdam and turn off at Exit 3 Noordwijkerhout/Lisse, then take N-208 to Lisse. From Amsterdam, take A-4 toward The Hague, turn off at Exit 4 and take N-207 toward Lisse. At Lisse, there will be signs directing you to Keukenhof.

By train, travel to the Leiden Centraal railway station, and take bus No. 54 to Keukenhof.

• **Cost:** Admission for adults is 12.50 euros (about \$16.25); senior citizens (65 and older) 11.50 euros; children (4 to 11) 5.50 euros. Parking is 4 euros.

• **On the Web:** Find more at www.keukenhof.nl.

— STARS AND STRIPES

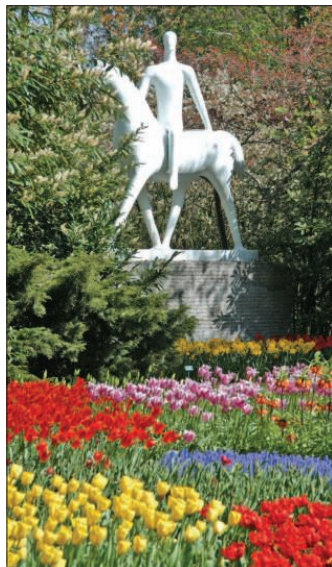
several prominent bulb growers from the area. The area had been designed as a garden in 1840 on land belonging to the medieval estate of Slot Teylingen Castle. Vegetables for the castle were grown in the Kitchen Garden, from which Keukenhof gets its name.

With its extraordinary color palette, sweet intoxicating scents and carpet of spring flowers, Keukenhof is a sure place to shake off the gloom of winter.

Lori Ann Martin, a Navy lieutenant commander who had been stationed at Naval Hospital Rota, Spain, is now at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, N.C.



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Flowers bloom in front of the horse-and-rider statue at Keukenhof ("kitchen garden") in Lisse, Netherlands. While this sculpture is permanent, different sculptures are displayed among other flower beds each year.

LORI ANN MARTIN,
Special to Stars and Stripes

From the simply beautiful to the very unusual,

Keukenhof provides an extraordinary palette of color throughout its 80 acres.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Red tulips stand out against blue grape hyacinths at Keukenhof.



Passing swans make a heart shape



Paved paths make for easy walking

he love of spring



in a pond in the center of Keukenhof garden.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

From the platform of the old windmill, there is a great view of the flower garden and the tulip fields surrounding it. The popular flower show in Lisse is open March 24 to May 20 this year.



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

through the colorful gardens at Keukenhof.



LORI ANN MARTIN/Special to Stars and Stripes

Artificial lily pads provide a popular spot for taking photos in the middle of the lake, as colorful blooms reflect in the still water.

Volksmarch

This weekend, the city of Bitche, France, hosts its 14th volksmarching event. Offering its popular 42- and 50-kilometer marathons, the club also has shorter distances of 10- and 20-kilometers. Don't rule this event out if you're not a long-distance maniac.

Located southwest of Kaiserslautern, Germany, Bitche is a nice town that boasts an impressive looking fortress. Expect to trudge up and down some hills! Fellow walkers here said that previous marathons were challenging, and I figure that little will change this year.

You can begin both long-distance courses each day between 7-9 a.m.; wrap up your walk by 6 p.m. and pick up the souvenir patch awarded only for the marathons (no souvenir for non-marathon trails). The 10K and 20K begin on Saturday and Sunday between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Once you've completed your event, stop by the 17th-century fortress and tour the underground passages with a pair of headlamps that will detail its history and highlights.

For information about Bitche, go to www.ville-bitche.fr.

Notes about this week's events:

- The German town of Birkenzell is south of Maxhütte-Haidhof and north of Regensburg.
- For those in the Frankfurt area, take note of the start times and choose between the five trails offered each day. The 7 p.m. finish time is the same on Saturday as for Sunday. This event begins in the VolksHaus on Borsigallee 40.

- More than 600 years old, the town of Freudenberg-Alchen hosts its 17th International Walking Days this Saturday and Sunday. If you fancy half-timbered houses, visit the historical part of Freudenberg for the treat. The 11- and 20-kilometer trails begin here each day between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m.; the finish is 5 p.m.
- Don't miss Sunday's Trientenberg event. This is always a nice walk, but remember that you won't find yourself walking through the streets of Germany's oldest city on this march—that comes later in the year. Start the SK and 10K between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m. and the 20K between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m. The souvenir is an American-style stem truck. Finish your trail by 5 p.m.

- In Italy, the Campes di Pinzano al Tagliamento hosts a hill, panoramic walk with mixed trails and gravel and asphalt roads. The trails, and especially the 34K, weave through small hillside towns such as Clauzetto, Vito d'Asio and Castelnuovo di Friuli. The event begins at the Association Amici di Cjampes di Pinzano.

E-mail Jennifer West at volksmarch@earthlink.net. Write her at: Volksmarch, Stars and Stripes, c/o Paulist Park, PO Box 29227-3717 (MPS)

Listings come from brochures of IVV-sanctioned events that were either collected at volksmarches or mailed to Jennifer West by clubs wishing to promote their events. Locations are noted in the host language whenever possible. More extensive lists are available in the IVV or DVV-IVV Internet.

Country/Town	Day(s) and Time(s)	Code	Km.	Starting Point	Award	Directional Reference
France						
Audincourt	Sun 0700-1500	F	10 & 20	Gymnase du COSEC	No award	S of Montbéliard
Bitche	Sat & Sun 0700-1400	-	10 & 20	Collège St Augustin	No award	SE of Sarreguemines
Bitche	Sat & Sun 0700-0900	M	42 & 50	Collège St Augustin	Patch & certificate	SE of Sarreguemines
Pette Rosselle	Sun 0700-1400	F	10	Château du Schœbach	No award	SW of Saarbrücken, GE
Servigny-les-St-Barbe	Sun 0700-1400	F	10	Foyer Socio Educatif	No award	NE of Metz
Servigny-les-St-Barbe	Sun 0700-1300	F	20	Foyer Socio Educatif	No award	NE of Metz
Wiersheim	Sun 0700-1400	F	5	Salle des Fêtes	No award	NW of Strasbourg
Germany						
Alkofen	Sat 1000-1500, Sun 0600-1100	F	5 & 10	Grundschule	Angel	NDB, NW of Passau
Birkelsdorf	Sat 1200-1400, Sun 0700-1100	BF	5 & 10	near Gießhaus Söllner	B-medal	OFF, N of Regensburg
Bodelshausen	Sat 1200-1600, Sun 0630-1300	BFX	5 & 10	Türnhalle	Lighthouse	BWS, SW of Reutlingen
Burgbrach	Sat & Sun 0700-1200	F	6 & 11	Steigerwaldhalle	Bear wiscard & hat	FRÖ, E of Würzburg
Frankfurt/Im-Enkheim	Sat 0700-1500, Sun 0700-1300	BF	20	Volkshaus Enkheim	B-midi/Stuffed dog, mouse	HE, Borsigallee 40
Frankfurt/Im-Enkheim	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	BF	20	Volkshaus Enkheim	B-midi/Stuffed dog, mouse	HE, Borsigallee 40
Frankfurt/Im-Enkheim	Sat & Sun 0700-1100	BF	30	Volkshaus Enkheim	Volkshaus Enkheim	HE, Borsigallee 40
Freudenberg-Alchen	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	CFX	5, 11, 20	Türnhalle	Stuffed animal	NRW, NW of Siegen
Großheim	Sat 0700-1600, Sun 0700-1400	BFXY	5 & 10	Kultur/Mehrzweckhalle	B-medal	RP, S of Bingen
Großheim	Sat 0700-1300, Sun 0700-1200	BFK	25	Kultur/Mehrzweckhalle	RP, S of Bingen	RP, S of Bingen
Heilsbrunn	Sat 0700-1300, Sun 0700-1200	BFXYX3	5, 10, 20	Hohenzyllers	B-medal	FRM, SW of Nürnberg
Kerpen	Sat & Sun 0730-1300	FP	6, 12, 22	Gymnasium	Medal	NRW, W of Köln
Kirchenthumbach	Sat & Sun 0700-1130	FP	5 & 11	Schulturnhalle	Candle holder	OFF, SE of Bayreuth
Mengen	Sat 0800-1400, Sun 0700-1330	F	6 & 11	Abtschale	Model semi truck	BWS, E of Tullingen
Mengen	Sun 0800-1245	Swim	-	Treat, Hallenbad	Model semi truck	BWS, E of Tullingen
Menzhausen	Sun 0700-1300	CF	6, 10, 20	Antrethalle	Baseball cap	HE, W of Bad Hersfeld
Mogeln	Sun 0800-1300	CF	7 & 12	Bürgerhaus	Stuffed rabbit	BWN, N of Stuttgart
Schrozberg	Sat 0800-1500, Sun 0700-1330	FY	5, 10, 20	Stadthalle	Ceramic shoe pot	BWN, N of Crailsheim
Trier-Ehrang	Sun 0700-1400	CFN	5 & 10	Türnhalle Ehrang	Model semi truck	RP, N of Trier
Trier-Ehrang	Sun 0700-1300	CFN	20	Türnhalle Ehrang	Model semi truck	RP, N of Trier
Unterelsheim	Sat & Sun 0600-1400	CF	10	Bürgerhaus	No award	MOB, N of München
Wolfsheim	Sat & Sun 0700-1300	CF	6, 10, 20	Haus Stadtmühle	Souvenir	RP, NW of Kaiserslautern

Italy

Campes di Pinzano	Sun 0900-1000	F	6, 12, 24	See misc. notes	Local handicraft	N of Spilimergo
San Sisto di Livorno	Sun 0830-0900	F	5, 10, 19	See misc. notes	Easter cake	W of Portogruaro
S. Pietro di Rosà	Sun 0800-0900	F	6, 10, 20	Campo Sportivo	No award	S of Bassano
Selva di Val Gardena	Sun 0800-1200	F	5 & 10	Cassa Cultura	No award	W of Cortina d'Ampezzo
Vanzadiz di Legnano	Sun 0830-0900	FX	7, 12, 18	See misc. notes	Bottle of wine (1st 800)	SW of Vicenza
Verona (Borgo S. Croce)	Sun 0800-0900	F	4, 11, 18	Via Guido d'Arezzo	1 Kg Verona	HE, W of Verona
Gargano	Sun 0800-0900	F	7, 12, 22	Central Comm. Mall	Chocolate Easter egg	N of Vicenza

Luxembourg

Brouch	Sun 0700-1500	F	5 & 10	Sportfield	No award	NW of Luxembourg city
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Netherlands

Spaubeek	Sun 0700-1400	-	6, 12, 18	Multifunctioneel Centrum	No award	W of Brunssum
Spaubeek	Sun 0700-1300	-	25	Multifunctioneel Centrum	No award	W of Brunssum

Switzerland

Biretswil	Sun 0800-1300	-	5 & 10	Werkhof	Cow glass	SE of Uster
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United Kingdom

Henley-on-Thames	Sun 0900-1000	-	5 & 10	Tesco Car Park	Souvenir	N of Reading
Soudrop	Sun 0900-1100	-	10 & 20	Bedford Arms PH	Souvenir	NW of Bedford
Vernham Dean	Sun 0900-1000	-	10 & 20	Posters Pavilion	Souvenir	N of Andover

GENERAL CODES:

B - Awards from past events available (B-medals)
 C - Bring a cup for free refreshments at the control points
 X - Shower/Wash facilities at start half
 F - Free refreshment at control points
 M - Marathon or short-distance
 N - Nordic walking event
 P - Music at start half
 S - Stroller-friendly trails

a - Shorter trail noted as stroller-friendly
 T - Evening/Night walk, carry a flashlight
 X - Award available while supply lasts
 W - Course for wheelchair participants
 Y - Young Walkers' Tour or Bambini-Liga event
 3 - Reduced price of 3 euros for start card & B-medal

GERMAN STATE/REGION CODES:

SHH - Schleswig-Holstein Hamburg
 NDB - Niedersachsen/Berlin
 NRW - Nordrhein-Westfalen
 RP - Rheinland-Pfalz
 HE - Hessen
 SAR - Saarland
 BWL - Baden-Württemberg Nord
 BWS - Baden-Württemberg Süd
 THS - Thüringen/Sachsen
 FRO - Oberfranken (Upper Franken)
 FRM - Mittelfranken (Middle Franken)
 FRI - Unterfranken (Lower Franken)
 SCH - Schwaben
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 67681 Sembach Flugplatz, GE
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OUTDOOR RECREATION SKI EVENTS

These ski event listings were sent to Stripes by base Outdoor Recreation offices. Send your information to travel@mail.estripes.osd.mil.

ITALY

VICENZA OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 19, Alleghe, Italy; March 26, Obereggen, Italy; April 2, San Martino, Italy. DSN 634-7453.

GERMANY

BAUMHOLDER 222nd BSF OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 26, Black Forest Ski Trip, Feldberg, Germany, transportation and ski or snowboard rental, \$65 per seat. DSN 465-7182 or CIV 06783-67182

KAISERSLAUTERN OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 19, express to Jungfrau, Switzerland, \$55 adults, \$45 children; March 23, express to Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55 adults, \$45 children; March 25-27, Flims-Laxa, Switzerland, \$199; March 26, express to St. Anton, Austria, \$55 adults, \$45 children. Kaiserslautern ODR also offers ski and snowboard rental. DSN 480-7751 or CIV 0631-536-7751.

MANNHEIM OUTDOOR RECREATION: March 19,

Feldberg, Germany, \$35 plus lift; March 19, teen trip to Feldberg (\$25 plus lift); March 26; April 2 and 10, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$50 plus lift. MOR's ski swap runs now to April 1, bring in old equipment or just come in and browse. MOR also rents snowboards and performs ski maintenance. DSN 381-7215 or 381-7232, CIV 0621-730-7215 or 0621-730-7232.

— KAREN BRADBURY



PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

CORRECTION: The wrong map of Italy appeared with "Quick Trips" on March 15. Above is the correct map, showing Ravello, on the Amalfi Coast.



Alpine snow conditions

Resort	Snow Depth	ON	OFF	Resort	Runs	Lifts
Kaunertal, AUS	240/45	Good	Varied	Good	8/8	
Mayerhofen, AUS	180/40	Good	Varied	Good	20/24	
Neustift, AUS	200/20	Good	Packed	Good	20/24	
Obertauern, AUS	290/93	Excellent	Varied	Good	24/27	
Pitztal, AUS	250/60	Excellent	Closed	Closed	7/7	
St. Anton, AUS	330/80	Excellent	Powder	Excellent	83/83	
Chamonix, FR	300/60	Good	Packed	Open	47/47	
Garmisch-GER	310/30	Good	Varied	Open	23/27	
Feldberg, GER	180/150	Excellent	Powder	Good	27/28	
Corviglia, IT	120/90	Good	Packed	Packed	18/18	
Passo Tonale, IT	390/60	Excellent	Powder	Good	25/25	
Engelberg, SW	242/47	Good	Packed	Hard	22/22	
Saas Fee, SW	140/70	Excellent	Varied	Good	33/36	
Zermatt, SW	219/155	Good	Varied	Good	35/35	

as of March 14, 2005

General Information
 All measurements are in centimeters.
 Great skiing due to the recent snowfall.
 Superb cond., plenty of nice snow.
 Good-skiing/boarding throughout the area.
 Great cond., for this time of year.
 24/27.
 Great conditions - wax up your skis!
 Superb cond., plenty of nice snow.
 Good skiing on well groomed pistes.
 Great skiing due to the recent snowfall.
 Great conditions - wax up your skis!
 Spring conditions on piste.
 Spring conditions on piste.
 Great skiing due to Sunday's snowfall.
 Plenty of good snow at altitude.
 Great conditions - wax up your skis!
 Great on piste cond., okay cond., off piste.

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Saturday 19th - Sunday 20th February
 Beginner Ski Course starts 10:00 on Saturday
 Includes 12:00 on Sunday
 Cost € 25, plus lift ticket

Saturday 19th - Sunday 20th February
 Cross-country skiing
 Ski on the ice and snow!
 Cost € 15

Saturday 19th - Sunday 20th February
 Beginner Snowboard Course starts 10:00 on Saturday
 Includes 12:00 on Sunday
 Cost € 25, plus lift ticket

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More Italian cooking

Interested in adding a little variety into your Italian cooking? You may want to spend Memorial Day weekend in Mantua, Italy, and participate in a Gourmet Italia cooking class, which runs May 27 to 30. It includes lessons in making risotto, pizza and pasta at a historical rice farm with restaurant.

The price is \$545 per person, double occupancy, and includes nine hours of cooking courses, three nights' lodging, three breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, a guided tour of Mantua with English-speaking guide, a booklet of recipes, English-speaking interpreter and Gourmet Italia interpreter.

Contact Larry Pisoni at telephone (+39) 0 461-864005 or e-mail gl-one@gourmet-italia.com.

V-E Day tour

The 60th anniversary of V-E Day on May 8 will probably mark the last great commemoration of World War II in France.

If you are interested, you may want to take Destination Tours' special 13-day commemorative trip to the Victory Channel and A&E Travel.

It begins in Paris with a city tour, Seine cruise and dinner and reserved seating offered by the president of France at the final ceremony at the Arc d'Triumph. It then visits Normandy's Memorial Museum in Caen, the American Cemetery, Omaha Beach, St. Mere-Eglise, Utah Beach, the German Cemetery and Bayeux. It then tours the Battle of the Bulge sites in Belgium and Luxembourg, and Remagen, Germany, and ends in Germany with a Rhine River cruise.

The cost is \$3,700 per person, double occupancy, and includes 12 nights' lodging in first-class hotels, breakfasts and most meals, private reserved seats at the Paris ceremony, private wreath-laying ceremonies at the Normandy American Cemetery and Luxembourg American Cemetery, private VIP reception, banquet cruise in Paris, private cruise of the invasion beaches in Normandy, motor coach transportation, tips and Rhine cruise.

An additional five-day trip visits Berchtesgaden and Munich in Germany. It costs \$1,336 per person, double occupancy.

The company also offers a Cold War Commemorative Tour and one- and multiple-day tours of the D-Day beaches.

For details, go to the Web site www.wv2tours.com.

Listings are subject to change. It's wise to check with the local tour board to confirm details of the event before traveling.

AUSTRIA

www.austria-info.at
VIENNA: Easter market, **through March 23**, Castle Schönbrunn
VIENNA: OsterKlang Festival, **March 18-28**,
VIENNA: Johann Strauss ball, **March 19**
HALL: Easter festival, **March 19, 24-25**
SALZBURG: Easter festival, **March 19-28**
VIENNA: Vienna Festival, **May 7-June 19**

BELGIUM

www.visitbelgium.com
NATIONWIDE: Anniversary of 175 years of independence, **all year**.
BRUSSELS: WOLANON: Beer **2005, all year**.
BRUSSELS: Festival of fantastic film, **through March 26**.
BRUSSELS: Mini-Europe open, **March 19-Jan. 9**.
NATIONWIDE: Flanders festival, **March 22-Oct. 23**.
TOURNAI: Grand flower market, **March 25**.
CINCEY: Flea market and antique fair, **March 25-28**.
HERVE: Cavalcade, **March 28**.
Procession.

CZECH REPUBLIC

www.visitczechia.cz
PRAGUE: Easter markets, **March 18-April 8**.

DENMARK

www.visitdenmark.com
BILLUND: Legendol open, **March 19-Oct. 30**.

ENGLAND

www.visitbritain.com
LONDON: Classical, **March 18-23**.
LONDON: Classical music and instruments exhibit, Olympia.

Best bets for the week

GERMANY: In the mood for a good carnival? Head to Frankfurt's fairgrounds on the Ratsweg for the annual spring Dippemesse, a tradition that's been carried on since the 14th-century ceramics markets.

From tomorrow until May 10, you'll find games, food and high-tech rides, including Europe's biggest roller coaster and others with names like "Flying Circus" and "X-treme." Of course there are gentler rides for children. Fireworks open and close the event. The carnival is open 2 to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 2 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday and noon to 11 p.m. on Sundays. Thursdays are family days with tickets half price.

SPAIN: The days between Palm Sunday and Easter have a full schedule of processions throughout the country as it celebrates Holy Week, a tradi-

tion honoring the Passion since the 16th century. The bigger events are in the cities of Salamanca and Zamora in Castile, Calanda in Aragon and Malaga, Granada and Seville in Andalusia, with the latter especially known for its pageantry. In this city, 57 brotherhoods of about 60,000 members carry 116 floats with decorated holy effigies from their churches to the cathedral and back in processions accompanied by drums and flamenco songs. These processions, which leave from the cathedral at noon, can last between four and 13 hours, depending on how far the mother church is from the cathedral. The early morning of Good Friday is especially recommended with a procession of six brotherhoods and their images of the Virgin Mary and the Martyr. For more details, go to www.sol.com/en.

— JAYNE TRAENDLY

LONDON: Stitch 2005, **March 31-April 3**. Needlecrafts, Olympia.
BIRMINGHAM: Go Fishing, **April 1-3**. Angling fair.
IPSWICH: Railway Modellers Association open Day, **April 2**.
LONDON: Olympia music fair, **April 2**.
LONDON: Olympia music fair, **April 2**.
LONDON: Festival of railway modeling, **April 2-3**. Alexandra Palace.
ST. ALBANS: International Napoleonic fair, **April 3**.

FRANCE

www.francetourism.com
METZ: Flea market, **April 2, 16; May 7, 21**.
DIJON: Florissimo, **through March 20**. Tropical plants and flowers.
LYON: International fair, **March 18-27**.
MARSEILLE: Carnival, **March 19**.
NICE: Gourd festival, **March 27**.
PARIS: Film festival, **March 28-April 4**.

GERMANY

www.germany-tourism.de
MUNICH: Strong beer season, **through March 20**. Löwenbräu Keller.
NÜRNBERG: Easter market, **through March 28**.
HAGGARD: Dom, **March 18-April 17**. Carnival.
HEIDELBERG: Long night of the museums, **March 19**.
FRANKFURT: Dippemesse, **March 18-April 9**. Carnival on fair grounds.
HAMBURG: Spring festival, **March 18-April 17**.
STUTTGART: Long night of the museums, **March 19**.
NEU-ANSPACH (Hesse): Easter egg market, **March 19-20**.
BENSHEIM: Irish music festival, **March 20**.
BRANDENBURG: Easter medieval spectacular, **March 26-28**.
ROTHENBURG AM TAUBER: Shepherd's dance, **March 27**.

HEIDELBERG: Spring festival, **April 1-30**.

HUNGARY

www.hungarytourism.hu
BUDAPEST: Spring festival, **March 19-April 4**.
HOLKOC: Easter festival, **March 27-28**.

IRELAND

www.travel.ie
DUBLIN: St. Patrick's Day festival, **through March 20**.

ITALY

www.italiantourism.com
FLORENCE: Explosion of the cart, **March 27**.
VENICE: **March 27**. Fun runs.

NETHERLANDS

www.holland.com/uk
THE HAGUE: Holland art fair, **March 24-28**.
USSE: Keukenhof gardens open, **March 24-May 20**.

SCOTLAND

www.visitscotland.com
GLASGOW: International comedy festival, **through March 26**.
EDINBURGH: Easter festival, **March 24-28**.
HAWICK (Borders): Reivers festival, **March 25-27**. Historical festival.

SPAIN

www.tourspain.co.uk
NATIONWIDE: 400th anniversary of Don Quixote, **through 2005**.
BARCELONA: The year of Don Quixote, **through 2006**.
EL PINO: Palm procession, **March 20**.
NATIONWIDE: Holy Week, **March 20-27**.

SWITZERLAND

www.switzerlandtourism.ch
LUCERNE: Easter festival, **through March 20**.
GENEVA: Hot-air balloon festival, **through March 20**.



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MILITARY UPDATE Lamaker: 'A vets aren't equal'

Tom Philpott

VA chairman says new generation comes with new health care needs

Rep. Steve Buyer, R-Ind., the new chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, says the medical and rehabilitation needs of a new generation of war veterans leave him more certain than ever that Congress agreed in 1996 when it opened VA health care to any veteran willing to pay modest fees.

"While some veterans' organizations like to create a theme, that 'a veteran is a veteran (and) there is no difference,' I disagree," said Buyer (pronounced boo-yeer).

A decade ago, in the wake of a Persian Gulf War that saw relatively few U.S. casualties, the Department of Veterans Affairs went back to worrying about an aging patient population and underserved VA clinics and hospitals, Buyer said. Those concerns, along with wishful thinking about the VA billing employer-provided insurance plans for the cost of care, led Congress to open VA facilities to veterans neither poor nor disabled.

Time has shown that to be a mistake, Buyer said. Today, the VA has \$3 billion in "uncollected debt" for health care rendered that insurance companies have not paid.

"And we find ourselves now in protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the war on terror all over the world. So the sense from 1996 that we could open up the VA to protect the bricks and mortar because of a declining population of veterans," Buyer said, is replaced by "the reality that we have more veterans now that have to come into the system."

Buyer's comments came in an interview for this column days after his committee voted to impose an enrollment fee of \$230 to \$500 a year on 2.4 million veterans in priority categories 7 and 8 — those who are not poor and have no service-connected disability.

In January, Republican leaders removed Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., as committee chairman for being too close to veterans groups, too supportive of expanding benefits and too dismissive of Bush administration plans to slow VA spending and impose fees on low-priority veterans.

New chairman Buyer, 46, is a blunt-spoken attorney and Citadel graduate who was deployed in the first Gulf War as an Army Reserve lawyer. With oversight responsibility now for the second-largest department in government, Buyer said he has three short-term priorities.

■ **Re-focus VA health care on its "core constituency"** of service-disabled, indigent and special-needs veterans.

■ **Develop a "seamless transition" process** for veterans moving from active duty to VA care. So far more than 1 million have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan and as many as 100,000 could have post-traumatic stress disorder, Buyer said. "The VA needs to prepare to receive them."

■ **Improve VA rehabilitation and vocational training** to ensure that even the most severely injured veterans return to rewarding lives.

"For a lot of years," Buyers said, "it was,

'Here's your check. Good luck in your life. And if you find it in a bottle, we'll try to get you in a program.' I want the system to be far more personal."

Buyer also said he expects a new bipartisan Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission, which will hold its first meeting soon, to review whether Congress went too far on allowing concurrent receipt of military retirement and VA disability payments. Buyer said that as chairman of the House subcommittee on military personnel a few years ago, he "fought \$25 million" to lift the concurrent receipt ban only for 100 percent, combat-disabled retirees.

"Little did I realize that my care and concern would be so enveloped" by politics, he said, and the ban quickly lifted to benefit a few hundred thousand retirees, many having no combat-related disability.

Buyer also expects the commission to consider whether to change the way disability ratings are set or to tighten the definition of "service-connected" injuries or ailments.

"There is something bothersome in the system where you can have a soldier blow out his knee from a roadside bomb and end up with a disability that's the same as a guy who blew out his knee sliding into home plate at church league softball on Sunday," said Buyer. "Is that the type of disability system that is just and fair?"

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20120-1111, e-mail mlupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com

ID theft protection

WASHINGTON — Amid rising anger over thefts of personal data, lawmakers Tuesday urged limits on the sale of Social Security numbers and other confidential information. "I personally see no socially redeeming value in anyone having the right to market or use Social Security numbers and other personal information without my approval," said Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, in a written statement.

Congress has considered banning the sale of Social Security numbers before, but legislators are now rallying around the idea in the wake of a series of security breaches that gave identity thieves access to restricted information kept by data brokers ChoicePoint Inc. and LexisNexis.

ChoicePoint Chief Executive Derek Smith, making his first appearance before lawmakers since the scandal erupted last month, agreed at the hearing that some regulation may be needed. Smith said he would support, for example, "a single, reasonable, nationwide mandatory notification requirement" under which companies would tell consumers when their data had been released improperly.

But Smith and LexisNexis President Kurt P. Sanford resisted the idea of a ban on the sale of Social Security numbers. Sanford pointed out that the numbers can help banks verify that transactions are legitimate and help debt collectors find people who are delinquent with the right person.

From wire reports

TUESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES				
52-week High	Low	Net Change	% Change	52-week Low
18,554.45	7,910.49	Dow Jones Industrial	+18.94	1,350.51
3,089.97	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	+22.51	1,854.60
1,553.82	259.86	Dow Jones Utilities	+36.51	1,262.42
7,455.08	6,211.33	NYSE Composite	+23.46	1,452.59
1,539.14	1,158.74	Russell 2000	+1.51	1,262.42
2,431.69	1,558.82	Nasdaq Composite	+4.45	1,276.83
1,229.11	1,066.72	S&P 500	+0.75	1,276.83
663.35	548.29	S&P 500 VIX	+0.15	1,276.83
656.11	515.90	Wall Street Journal	+0.35	1,276.83
13,108.35	10,765.52	D. Williams 2000	+0.35	1,276.83

NYSE					AMEX					NASDAQ				
Most Active (\$1 or more)					Most Active (\$1 or more)					Most Active (\$1 or more)				
Symbol	Vol	(\$)	Chg		Symbol	Vol	(\$)	Chg		Symbol	Vol	(\$)	Chg	
Lucant	253,028	2.93	+1.1		SPDR	35,247	121.14	+1.5		Nasdaq100	645,423	32.34	+1.7	
Microsoft	229,974	63.85	+0.8		Seminar	17,937	33.13	+0.8		Microsoft	93,740	21.51	+0.2	
East	7,154	7.44	+0.1		SPDR	35,320	2.50	+1.1		Microsoft	93,740	21.51	+0.2	
TimeWarner	21,337	17.61	+0.1		Seminar	85,865	10.92	-1.3		Intel	19,914	24.27	+0.7	
Comcast	20,447	26.53	+0.1		SPDR	35,320	2.50	+1.1		Intel	19,914	24.27	+0.7	
Comcast	19,232	61.28	+2.3		SPDR	35,320	2.50	+1.1		Intel	19,914	24.27	+0.7	
Oracle	17,761	29.75	+1.5		SPDR	35,320	2.50	+1.1		Intel	19,914	24.27	+0.7	
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Oracle	17,761	29.75	+1.5		SPDR									

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Name	High	Low	Net Change	% Change
Alliant Techsystems	107	17.22	+0.38	+0.38
Airbus	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Boeing	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
General Dynamics	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Raytheon	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Lockheed Martin	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Northrop Grumman	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Boeing	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Boeing	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40
Boeing	1.00	41.20	+0.40	+0.40

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS				
Name	High	Low	Net Change	% Change
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21
Fidelity Invest. Global	37.95	+0.21	+0.21	+0.21

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1.3774
Dollar buys	\$0.7260
British pound	\$1.6450
Japanese yen (March 17)	\$0.0060
South Korean won (March 16)	\$0.0020
Commercial rates	
Bahrian (Dinar)	\$1.3774
Bahraini (Dinar)	\$1.3774
Canada (Dollar)	\$1.3774
Denmark (Krone)	\$1.3774
Egypt (Pound)	\$1.3774
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.3774
India (Rupee)	\$1.3774
Israel (Shekel)	\$1.3774
Japan (Yen)	\$1.3774
Kuwait (Dinar)	\$1.3774
Norway (Krone)	\$1.3774
Philippines (Peso)	\$1.3774
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	\$1.3774
Singapore (Dollar)	\$1.3774
South Korea (Won)	\$1.3774
Switzerland (Franc)	\$1.3774
Thailand (Baht)	\$1.3774
Taiwan (New Dollar)	\$1.3774
United Kingdom (Pound)	\$1.3774
United States (Dollar)	\$1.3774
United States (Dollar)	\$1.3774
United States (Dollar)	\$1.3774
United States (Dollar)	\$1.3774
United States (Dollar)	\$1.3774

PRECIOUS METALS	
Gold	\$442.45
Silver	\$17.39
Palladium	\$1,100.80
Platinum	\$945.10
Rhodium	\$1,100.80
Ruthenium	\$945.10
Silver	\$17.39
Titanium	\$1,100.80
Vanadium	\$945.10
Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80
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Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80
Zinc	\$1,100.80

INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	5.50
90-day Treasury bill	5.50
3-month bill	5.50
6-month bill	5.50
1-year bill	5.50
2-year bill	5.50
3-year bill	5.50
5-year bill	5.50
10-year bill	5.50
30-year bill	5.50
1-year note	5.50
2-year note	5.50
3-year note	5.50
5-year note	5.50
10-year note	5.50
30-year note	5.50
1-year bond	5.50
2-year bond	5.50
3-year bond	5.50
5-year bond	5.50
10-year bond	5.50
30-year bond	5.50

Present, accounted for

Presenting well in public is an important skill many of us overlook as employees, says Eve Guernsey, CEO of JP Morgan Asset Management, Americas. She's sent along a few tips:

- **Volunteer to do it.** Very few of us rush getting up and addressing large groups. We get nervous, it's one, etc. Do it anyway.
- **Unleash or 400.** The ability to effectively present an idea to one client or 400 is the same. Be comfortable before either audience.

■ **Delivery.** For women, speak in a lower tone than normal to draw in the crowd and retain their attention.

■ **Take a course.** Public speaking can be improved. As your responsibilities in the company change, so should your presentation style, Guernsey said.

From The Associated Press

CENTS AND SENSIBILITY	
Money tip of the day	
By CHUCK MYERS	
KRT	
While more people turn to electronic tax filing, there are still some who prefer to go a more tactile route by consulting a tax guidebook. With every new tax-filing season comes a new line of books designed to aid taxpayers with the filing process and inform them of any tax code changes.	
Here is a sampling of some of the new editions:	
■ "How to Pay Zero Taxes, 2005 edition," by Jeff A. Schnepper, (\$16.95) — comprehensive guide to tax breaks, tax code changes, deductions and tax planning.	
■ "J.K. Lasser's Your Income Taxes 2005," (\$16.95) — features include tax rules and deductions, filing strategies.	
■ "Taxes 2005 For Dummies," (\$16.95) — covers how to fill out forms, capital gains, deductions and planning for the new tax year.	
■ "The Ernst and Young Tax Guide 2005," (\$18.95) — is loaded with information on tax filing, retirement planning and education saving account contributions.	

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AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first dropdown page in the sports section or AFRTS Web site at <http://mfm.hq.afmcc.mil>

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2005

(AFN-FAMILY)	(AFN-MOVIE)	(AFN-EUROPE)	(AFN-KOREA)	(AFN-SPORTS)	(SPECTRUM)	(AFN-PACIFIC)
9:00 Stanley	Movie "Born Into Brothels" (1997)	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	Hardball With Chris Matthews	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!
9:30 Sagans-Stameses Cat	Diana/Romney Dooney, Hector Ex-	Headline News	Headline News	Women's Quarterfinals	Low Carb & Lovin' It	Headline News
10:00 Franklin	Eric McCormack	(8:46) Oprah Winfrey	ESPNNews	The O'Reilly Factor	Design on a Dime	ESPNNews
10:30 Reading Rainbow (E)	(4:56) Movie *** "Raging Bull" (1980, Biography) Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	(3:51) Guiding Light	Advisory Board	Nightline	Style Star	Pacific Report
11:00 Sagans-Stameses Cat	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	(1:17) General Hospital	Headline News	Nightly Business Report	87 New Live	Two and a Half Men
11:30 Stanley	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Headline News	Headline News	For Friends First	The King of Queens	(2:51) Will & Grace
12:00 Dora the Explorer	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Judge Judy	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	American Morning	Charmed "Brain Drain"	Desperate Housewives "Suspicious Minds"
12:30 The Wiggles Live	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Strong Medicine	Pacific Report
13:00 Bob the Builder	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Any Day Now Live Is Love!	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno
13:30 Dragon Tales (E)	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Third Watch "Sex, Lies & Videotape"	The Late Show With David Letterman
14:00 Blue's Clues Post Party	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
14:30 Barney & Friends (E)	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
15:00 Funniest Home Videos	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
15:30 Growing Pains "Dirt Bike"	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
16:00 Pokemon	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
16:30 Yu-Gi-Oh! (Part 1 of 2)	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
17:00 Doug (E)	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
17:30 The Wild Thornberrys	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
18:00 The Fairly OddParents	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
18:30 Rugrats	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
19:00 That's So Raven	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
19:30 All That Music Group 3.W.	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
20:00 The Wiggles	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
21:00 Sabrina, the Teenage Witch	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
21:30 The Cozy Show	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
22:00 Home Improvement	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
22:30 Touching by an Angel "Math-er's Day"	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
23:00	De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Oscar-winning study of former boxer James J. LaGuardia	Today/William Shatner, St. Patrick's Day	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation	Law & Order "Armed Forces"	The Late Show With David Letterman
FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2005						
00:00 Doug (E)	(11:30) Movie *** "Star Trek: Generations" (1994)	Late Show-Letterman	Play With Me Sesame	Headline News	SportsCenter	Late Night With Conan O'Brien
00:30 The Wild Thornberrys	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	Access Hollywood	Bear in the Big Blue House	NBC Nightly News	American Idol	Wheel of Fortune
1:00 The Fairly OddParents	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
1:30 Rugrats	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
2:00 That's So Raven	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
2:30 All That Music Group 3.W.	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
3:00 The Wiggles	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
3:30 Sabrina, the Teenage Witch	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
4:00 The Cozy Show	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
4:30 Home Improvement	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
5:00 Touching by an Angel "Math-er's Day"	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
5:30 Sesame Street (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
6:00 Barney & Friends Gardening	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
6:30 Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
7:00 Dragon Tales (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
7:30 Bob the Builder	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
8:00 The Wiggles	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
8:30 Dora the Explorer	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
9:00 Stanley "Sunburn Stanley"	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
9:30 Sagans-Stameses Cat	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
10:00 Franklin	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
10:30 Reading Rainbow (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
11:00 Sagans-Stameses Cat	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
11:30 Stanley	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
12:00 Dora the Explorer	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
12:30 The Wiggles "Zoro Zap"	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
13:00 Bob the Builder	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
13:30 Dragon Tales (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
14:00 Blue's Clues Post Party	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
14:30 Barney & Friends (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
15:00 Funniest Home Videos	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
15:30 Growing Pains	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
16:00 Pokemon	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
16:30 Yu-Gi-Oh! (Part 2 of 2)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
17:00 Doug (E)	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
17:30 The Wild Thornberrys	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
18:00 The Fairly OddParents	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
18:30 Rugrats	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
19:00 The Fairly OddParents	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
19:30 Dave the Barbarian	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
20:00 Danny Phantom	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
20:30 Drake & Josh	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
21:00 Unsubbed "The Secret"	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
21:30 Phil of the Future "My Way"	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
22:00 Switched	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
22:30 Radio Free Roscoe	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
23:00 The Cozy Show	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil
23:30 Home Improvement	(12:00) Movie *** "Rushmore" (1999) Jason Schwartzman, a teen who enrolls in a prep school to be a teacher's pet	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Action	Dr. Phil

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FACES

Commonwealth Games baton begins trek

Elle Macpherson set the 2006 Commonwealth Games baton off on its yearlong journey to the Australian host city of Melbourne.

The Australian model carried the Queen's baton through the gates of Buckingham Palace on Monday before handing it to 2000 Olympic 400-meter champion Cathy Freeman.

Queen Elizabeth II put a microphone containing her message to athletes competing at the games from March 15-26, 2006, into the high-tech baton, which also contains two miniature TV cameras and a GPS tracking device.

The technology will allow the baton's progress to be followed on the Internet as it is carried by thousands of runners on its 110,000-mile relay through all 71 Commonwealth nations.

Macpherson

Essence Music Festival prepares lineup

Frankie Beverly and Maze will close out the 11th annual Essence Music Festival July 1-3, as they have every year since the festival began.

The 2005 festival will kick off a yearlong celebration of the 35th anniversary of Essence magazine, a lifestyle publication aimed at black women.

Along with familiar acts, festival organizers also have booked some of urban music's brightest new stars for the "party with a purpose," in the Louisiana Superdome.

Joining Aretha Franklin on the stage will be Alicia Keys, John Legend, Ruben Studdard, Destiny's Child, Kanye West, Teena Marie, Fantasia, Lionel Richie, Mo'Nique and Keri.

Beckham preparing for life after soccer

English soccer star David Beckham unveiled plans Monday for The David Beckham Academy, which opens this summer next to the Millennium Dome in East London, where he grew up.

"There is that certain kind of buzz when you step on a football pitch," Beckham said. "I want to be able to get that same kind of buzz with the soccer school."

"I'll play up to the point where I feel my legs are getting too old and I can't do it anymore at the top level," he added. "When that time comes, that when I'll go into the soccer school."

After this season, Beckham has two years remaining on his contract with Real Madrid. He arrived at the club 20 months ago, and it's been nothing. He'll turn 30 in May, and he knows Madrid fans are demanding and impatient.

"I'm happy at Real Madrid and want to stay at Real Madrid as long as I can," he said. "But in football life, you never know what is going to happen."

Concert to be held for tsunami victims

Andrea Bocelli and other top Italian musicians will perform in a concert next week to raise funds to help victims of the tsunami in Sri Lanka.

The March 21 concert will be held at the Forum di Assago in Milan.

The agency said on its Web site that it would distribute funds raised in the concert to help tens of thousands of people who have been displaced in Sri Lanka following the Dec. 26 tsunami.

"We welcome this event ... to assist the internally displaced people in Sri Lanka who have experienced not only the effects of a protracted civil conflict, but now a natural disaster as well," said James Lynch, head Commissioner for Refugees in Sri Lanka.

Bocelli

of the U.N. High
Lanka.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Judas Priest's Rob Halford takes the stage and is greeted by a thunderous ovation at the Stadthalle in Offenbach, Germany, on Friday.

RAYMOND T. CONWAY
Stars and Stripes



Message from The Metal God

Judas Priest singer Rob Halford praises U.S. troops as the band kicks off its world tour in Europe

BY RAYMOND T. CONWAY
Stars and Stripes

Legendary metal singer Rob Halford is back with a vengeance, once again commanding center stage with the reunited British heavy metal pioneers Judas Priest.

More than 4,000 leather- and denim-clad heavy metal maniacs packed the Stadthalle in Offenbach, Germany, as Halford and band mates Glenn Tipton, K.K. Downing, Ian Hill and Scott Travis ripped through an explosive two-hour, 22-song set.

The intensity of the band and crowd was electrifying, as fans ranging in age from 16 to 60 were treated to several classics such as "Breaking the Law," and "Living After Midnight,"

along with four killer cuts from the band's new album, "Angel of Retribution," which was released March 1. Backstage following the Offenbach performance, Halford spoke with Stars and Stripes and offered words of encouragement for U.S. troops fighting the war on terrorism at home and abroad.

"Right now, I have friends serving in Iraq, onboard the USS Stennis and in Guam, and the work they are doing is incredibly important, not only for America but the entire

world. I fully support what they're doing," he said.

Halford, who cites San Diego as one of his favorite hangouts, said he became friends with many sailors and Marines from the nearby Navy bases and the sprawling Camp Pendleton.

"I've spent a lot of time in America and have several friends in the U.S. military all over the world," said Halford.

GIs have always been big fans and

"Right now, I have friends serving in Iraq, onboard the USS Stennis and in Guam, and the work they are doing is incredibly important, not only for America, but the entire world. I fully support what they're doing."

Rob Halford, Judas Priest singer

supporters of Judas Priest and Halford's three solo bands: Fight, Two and Halford.

"Everyone in the band supports all [the troops], and we sincerely wish them the best and a safe return home to their families," he said.

During the concert, Priest performed several other stand-out tracks, such as "Beyond the Realms of Death" and an acoustic version of "Diamonds and Rust." The highlight of the night came with the band's mesmerizing performance of "Vic-

tim of Changes" from the "Sad Wings of Destiny" album.

One German fan, who identified himself only as Stefan, had tears running down his cheek as The Metal God delivered a bone-crushing scream in the song's finale.

"I'm a grown man, 36 years old, but that brought tears to my eyes," he said after the show. "They hit every note. ... Halford is just amazing."

Servicemen in Europe and Japan will have a chance to catch the metal legends. Starting Wednesday, Judas Priest rolls through the United Kingdom for 11 shows.

From there, Priest will make stops in Holland, Germany, Poland, Austria, Italy, Portugal and will wrap up the European leg on April 17 with three dates in Spain. After a short break, the band heads to Japan and will play seven shows May 8-18. Plans are under way for a North American summer tour.

For information on tour dates, locations and tickets, see www.judaspriest.com and concert listings in Sunday's Stars and Stripes Scene magazine. For lively metal discussion, check out The Metal God's Quorum message board at www.robhalford.com

E-mail Ray Conway at: conwayr@mail.strips.osd.mil

Horoscope

In his efforts to bring Christianity to the Irish people, St. Patrick, for whom this day is celebrated, was known to have incorporated Irish rituals into his teachings. One result is the Celtic cross, Patrick's melding of the sun, exalted by the Irish, and the Christian cross. In keeping with the holiday, Irish innovative and familiar ways to communicate.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 17). You turn into a high-powered magnet, attracting just what you need. The trick is deciding that you need beautiful people, things and situations in your life! Career shifts this spring help facilitate personal changes. Your family finally accepts an aspect of you in June. Aries and Taurus give you adventure, but romance with a sweet Scorpio intrigues.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Once you start a project, dynamic people start to join. Keeping these goals interested requires that you give them their "props" for what they add to the mix. Become a complaint-spewing machine.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Release — even if it means letting out a blood-curdling primal scream! Bottled-up energy is eventually detrimental. Too much time in a windowless room is bad for your soul. Find your patch of open sky to stretch out under.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). A rare encounter is featured. You're face to face with the qualities you appreciate but seldom experience: stillness, tranquility, surrender. Are you strong enough to give in? There's nothing to lose but your own baggage.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Something you were unable to accomplish yesterday is now quite doable. All you need is the guts to try again. With more than your usual exuberance, you can convince a VIP to join your team.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're like a cat playing with string. You consciously know that nothing will

come of the activity. This string is not match for you and will never be conquered or killed in the end. But isn't the exercise fun?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Return to your childhood fantasy. It's more plausible than ever now. In fact, all possible scenarios are possible today, for no other reason than this: You are choosing to see problems as opportunities.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The demands that are made of you are tedious, menial and, quite frankly, beneath you. (You're not a robot!) However, it's your attitude that can transform a boring task into a Zen exercise.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you're with that person who makes your heart beat faster, the whole world looks different. There's a magical cast to the scene, as if you're seeing things through colored glass under a smiling sun.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Confidence will attract money to you — or at least attract people who have money. You have the guts to greet anyone as though you know that you're someone worth knowing and knowing well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Nations once deemed unsafe or impractical now get another look. You're not as concerned about security as you once were, which makes it possible to explore new business options. Maybe you'll dream up an idea for a movie.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The situation calls for you to get along with everybody. Everybody. Even the person you have nothing in common with, aside from the fact that you are both carbon-based life forms.

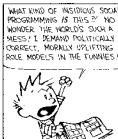
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll run into the vain, gluttonous and misguided. The natural tendency is to consider yourself superior, but this gets you nowhere. Instead, use the scenario as an opportunity for you to practice humility.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



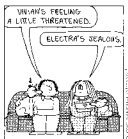
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



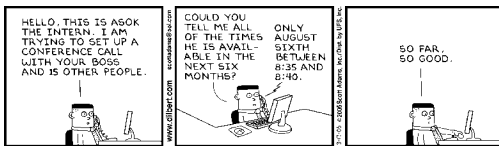
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



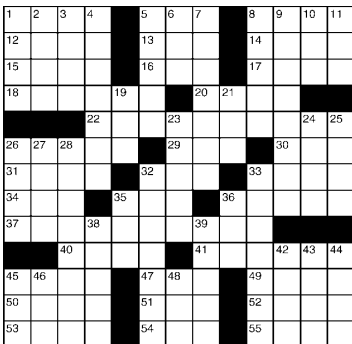
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



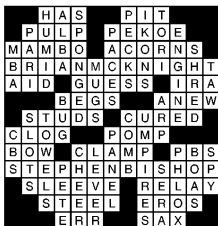
Across

- 1 Detail, for short
5 8-Across, for one
8 Nora's pet
12 Argonauts' patron
13 Mess up
14 Transaction
15 On
16 Speedwagon letters
17 Genie's hideout
18 Craving
20 "Yeah, right!"
22 Surprised
26 Knee counterpart
29 Irritate
30 Director Howard
31 It's good
32 for a breather
33 Train component
34 Showroom sample

Down

- 1 Herring's kin
2 Fountain of music
3 Piccadilly statue
4 House of representatives?
5 "10" star
6 Refrainable rock
7 Bad pun
8 Extemporize
9 Mariner
10 Highland chapeau
11 Mont Blanc, e.g.
19 Like 6-Down
21 Kenny G's instrument
23 "Dynasty" actress
24 "It's Impossible" singer
25 Recognize
26 Early birds?
27 Dryer collection
28 Toronto team
32 Sled
33 Bureau
35 Doctrine
36 Big
38 Old hat
39 Fix firmly (Var.)
42 Siamese
43 Parliamentary
44 Longings
45 "I — Camera"
46 You can't stand to have one
48 Guitar's kin

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-17

CRYPTOQUIP

P XNHPNPN PV QLYNLTN
ANYLHPQENQ S JLLV, EN
QELFHA BNC PT CJLFXHN

V LJ NSONQAJLRRPTB
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF AN L.A. BASEBALL PRO HAS A KNACK FOR SKETCHING PICTURES, IS HE AN ARTFUL DODGER?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals R

Son lets girlfriend walk on him

Dear Abby: My 25-year-old son, "Mitch," and his live-in girlfriend, "Mimi," just became engaged, and I'm really worried. They met in college, where Mimi admits she went to "get her MRS."

Mitch took a job in another state and started working on his graduate degree, Mimi tagged along. At first she had her own apartment. But since she "couldn't afford" a car, Mitch drove her to and from work every day. Then she got a job where he worked, and they began having lunch together every day to the exclusion of co-workers.

Two years later, Mimi still has no car of her own in a state where cars are a necessity. In addition, she's "just so tired" after her "long" 7 1/2-hour day that she "just can't manage to cook," so they either go out or Mitch does the cooking, too.

Abby, my son is lean, outgoing,

into sports and martial arts. Mimi is obese and lethargic. She constantly complains about her aches and pains and other people. She has no hobbies and spends every night watching television.

I'm afraid this is somehow my fault. Mitch's mother was "high maintenance." I modeled caretaking for him in his early years when she and I were still married, but never to this extent. I'm desperate to have a father-son talk about the path Mitch seems to be heading down, but I also know I risk alienating him, maybe permanently. Should I keep my mouth shut, or what?

Panicked Pop in Pawtucket

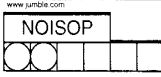
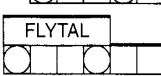
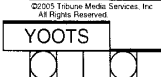
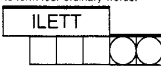
Talk to your son, but make absolutely sure that when you do, it is not perceived as an attack on his fiancée. Instead, discuss the mistakes you made during your marriage to Mitch's mother,

Dear Abby



JUMBLE

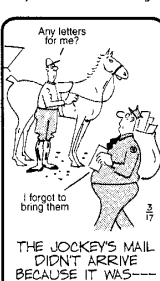
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Ans: AT THE (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GORGE FOCUS DECENT RAGLAN
Why the robbers headed for the seashore - THE COAST WAS "CLEAR"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiliron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Allow wife's indirect input on mom

Dear Annie: My wife has a very good relationship with my mother.

Mom always has valued my wife's opinion and often asks her for advice.

Mom recently entered a nursing home, and there are decisions that must be made regarding her care and future. The problem is that my siblings feel my wife has no place in these discussions, including giving me her opinion. I've made it clear that my wife's place is to help me with her advice during these difficult times.

I do not want to create a rift, but I value my wife's views, and I feel that Mom would want her involved, given their close relationship. I would like to think this is what marriage is all about - to act as a team in good times as well as bad. Am I on the right track here?

— Mom's Son

Dear Son: Yes and no. The

Annie's Mailbox



decisions about your mother's care should be made by her and her children, together.

If Mom wants your wife involved, she should say so to your siblings. If she is incapable of expressing this desire, your wife should not involve herself directly.

However, your siblings should not be telling you whose support and advice you can seek on your own.

Dear Annie: My wife and I, along with our three young children, just moved back to my home state. We have not yet found a home, so we are staying with my parents. My father is the problem.

Dad always has had a gruff, critical personality. On several occasions, he has yelled at my children for flimsy reasons, like not picking up the phone before the third ring, leaving the remote

control on the floor and not cleaning the hair out of the shower. All three of them are scared to be in a room alone with him.

Dad opened his home to us, and I don't feel it's my place to criticize his behavior.

— Bark Is Worse Than His Bite In The Southeast U.S.

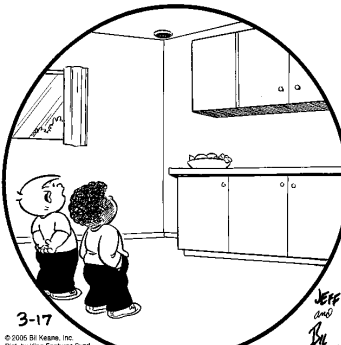
Dear Bark: Your father is unaccustomed to your presence, and he expects a certain amount of order in his home. There's no reason your children can't pick up the phone sooner, return the remote to its proper place and clean the hair out of the shower. However, the yelling is unnecessary.

Tell Dad he frightens the children when he raises his voice, and if he will ask more calmly, they will do their best to cooperate. Then tell your children to be respectful of Grandpa, and remind them that he isn't used to having children underfoot.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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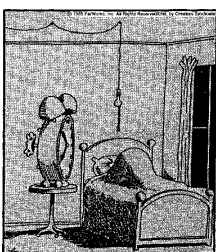
"This is a smoke detector. It's for when my dad is cooking dinner."



Dennis the Menace



The Far Side
© Gary Larson



Non Sequitur



Quasimodo ends his day.

266.217

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Bengals RB Brown signs five-year deal

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Bengals signed running back Rudi Johnson to a five-year contract on Wednesday, a year after he set the team's season record for rushing yardage.

The contract replaces a one-year, \$6.3 million deal Johnson signed on March 7 after he was designated the team's franchise player on Feb. 15. Terms of the new contract weren't disclosed. He was paid \$1.8 million in 2004.

Johnson set a Bengals record last season with 1,454 yards rushing.

"He has been a very productive player as well as a winning person, for our football team. He's to be commended for his part in keeping the core of our offensive unit together," coach Marvin Lewis said.

Johnson joins three other key offensive players — quarterback Carson Palmer and wide receivers Chad Johnson and T.J. Houshmandzadeh — who are signed to the team through at least 2008.

Johnson's rushing total in 2004 broke the Bengals' record of 1,435 yards set by Corey Dillon in 2000. Johnson also had 361 carries in 2004, beating the mark of 340 Dillon posted in 2001.

Johnson tied the team record for 100-yard rushing games in a season with five and set the Bengals in touchdowns with 12.

Browns sign LB Stewart

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Browns signed free agent linebacker Matt Stewart to a three-year contract Tuesday, giving coach Romeo Crennel another option for his defensive scheme.

Stewart, 25, started every game last season for the Atlanta Falcons, finishing second on the team with 89 tackles. He also made seven stops in two postseason games.

Crennel is switching Cleveland's defensive scheme to a 3-4 this season, making linebackers an even more important commodity.

The 6-foot-3, 232-pound Stewart, a native of Columbus, Ohio, played outside linebacker for the Falcons last season.

The Browns also re-signed free agent linebacker Ben Taylor to a one-year contract on Tuesday. He started eight games in 2003, and began last season as the club's starting weakside linebacker before hurting a chest muscle and undergoing surgery.

Gibbs says visit to former No. 1 draft choice Brown

WASHINGTON — Joe Gibbs wasted no time before starting a lawsuit of former No. 1 overall draft pick Courtney Brown.

Within hours after Brown's release by the Cleveland Browns, the Washington Redskins coach flew to Cleveland with defensive line coach Greg Blache and had dinner with Brown and Brown's wife Monday night, an official with the league told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Sports briefs

The official said Brown is scheduled to travel to Redskins Park on Thursday, following a visit with the Denver Broncos.

Brown, the first overall choice in the 2000 draft, was cut by Cleveland because he would not renegotiate his contract. He would have been due a \$2.5 million roster bonus Tuesday. Browns General Manager Phil Savage said he still hoped the team could re-sign the oft-injured defensive end.

Patriots re-sign OT Ashworth

FOXBORO, Mass. — Offensive tackle Tom Ashworth, who missed the second half of last season and the playoffs with a back injury, re-signed Tuesday with the New England Patriots.

The 6-foot-6, 305-pound Ashworth started 13 regular-season games during the 2004 season and all three playoff games, including a 32-29 win over the Carolina Panthers in the Super Bowl.

He started the first six games last season before being placed on injured reserve with a back injury on Nov. 6. He has played in 23 games, with 19 starts.

Ashworth, 27, originally was signed by San Francisco in April 2001 as an undrafted free agent out of Colorado. The Patriots signed him to their practice squad in September 2001 and he has been with the team since.

Most men's tourney teams failed to graduate 50 percent

ORLANDO, Fla. — A study says 42 of the 65 teams in the men's NCAA tournament graduated less than 50 percent of their players.

The graduation rate statistics, compiled in a study released Tuesday by the University of Central Florida, also found that women's teams in the NCAA tournament continue to graduate players at a much higher level. The numbers are based on athletes who entered the universities from 1994 to 1997 and were not able to graduate in six years.

If the NCAA's new academic reform plan was in place, the teams with less than 50 percent graduation rates would face penalties that include loss of scholarships and a ban on postseason play.

The NCAA has said penalties won't be issued until 2004-05 graduation data is included, which will happen in the 2005-06 academic year.

Kwan off to shaky start in figure skating championships

MOSCOW — Michelle Kwan got off to a shaky start in her return to international competition Wednesday with a dull and hesitant performance in the qualifying round in the World Figure Skating Championships.

The uninspired effort left the five-time world champion in fifth place in her group, trailing Irina Slutskina, Fumie Sugita, Yuka Koshino and defending champion Shizuka Arakawa.

McGwire to comply, testify at hearing

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mark McGwire plans to comply with a subpoena and attend Thursday's congressional hearing into steroid use in baseball, The Associated Press has learned.

McGwire's decision, revealed Wednesday by a representative of the former Oakland and St. Louis slugger who spoke on condition of anonymity, made it likely all six subpoenaed players would attend the session on Capitol Hill.

Less than 24 hours before the start of the highly anticipated hearing, Jose Canseco's request for immunity was denied by the House Government Reform committee. Canseco's lawyer said the former All-MVP will not be able to answer questions that would incriminate him.

"No witnesses have been or will be granted immunity," David Marin, a spokesman for committee chairman Rep. Tom Davis, said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Canseco's lawyer, Robert Sausnoke, was angry with the decision. "It begs the question as to what they're convening this hearing for," Sausnoke said in a telephone interview. "They effectively cut the legs off from underneath us."

Sausnoke said that without immunity, Canseco would invoke his Fifth Amendment right to refuse to answer questions.

"They told me we can't do the Fifth to every question," he said. "It's an absolute right of every citizen to not be compelled to give testimony against themselves. They do not make the decision. We do."

As an example of how immunity would limit Canseco, Sausnoke brought up McGwire's repeated denials of steroid use.

"If he still holds to that lie, then the only way we can disprove that is to give specific instances and talk openly and freely," Sausnoke said. "If we can't do that, then our credibility is undermined."



New York Yankees designated hitter Jason Giambi was excused from Thursday's congressional hearing because of his involvement in the federal investigation into illegal steroid distribution.

Boston pitcher Curt Schilling said he will comply with the subpoena, and Chicago White Sox trainer Herm Schneider said that Frank Thomas left Tucson, Ariz., on Tuesday, would stop at his home in Las Vegas, then would travel to Washington. Sammy Sosa and Rafael Palmeiro, were given off days Wednesday and Thursday by the Baltimore Orioles, a sign they would testify.

New York Yankees slugger Jason Giambi, who also was subpoenaed last week, was excused Tuesday from testifying because of his involvement in the continuing federal investigation into illegal steroid distribution.

"I would have done whatever they would have asked me to do and go from there," Giambi said Wednesday from the Yankees' training camp in Tampa, Fla. "They gave me an opportunity to focus on baseball so I appreciate that."

Baseball commissioner Bud Selig, union head Donald Fehr, baseball executive vice presidents Rob Manfred and Sandy Alderson and San Diego general manager Kevin Towers also will testify.

President Bush, the former Texas Rangers owner, refused to say whether the decision to subpoena players was an abuse of congressional power.

"I'm wise enough not to second-guess the intentions of the United States Congress," he said. "I do appreciate the public concern about the use of steroids in

sport, whether it be baseball or anywhere else, because I understand that when a professional athlete uses steroids, it sends terrible signals to youngsters."

Canseco, whose recent book accused several baseball stars of using steroids, submitted an opening statement to the committee in which he said, "I did not know that my revelations would reverberate in the halls of this chamber and in the hearts of so many."

Canseco's statement was first reported on the Web site of The (Baltimore) Sun, then obtained by the AP.

"I had hoped that what I experienced firsthand, when revealed, would give insight into a darker side of a game that I loved," he said, "that maybe it would force baseball to acknowledge it condoned this activity for the sole purpose of increasing revenue at the gate. Unfortunately, by my presence here today, it is clear that MLB is not interested in admitting the truth."

Canseco said he had endured criticism because of Major League Baseball.

"All of these attacks have been spurred on by an organization that holds itself above the law, an organization that chose to exploit its players for the increased revenue that lines its pockets and then sacrifice those same players to protect the web of secrecy that was hidden for so many years."

AP Sports Writers Howard Fendrich in Washington, David Ginsburg in Baltimore and Howard Uman in Fort Myers, Fla., contributed to this report

Giants given victory after lights go out

The Associated Press

This time, no one could say it was lights out just because San Francisco's Jason Schmidt was on the mound. After all, he gave up a run.

But the lights did go out after his work was finished Tuesday night. A power failure hit Scottsdale Stadium, and the Giants were declared 3-2 winners over the Milwaukee Brewers in the Arizona desert.

San Francisco's Brian Dillmore was leading off the bottom of the eighth inning and Gary Glover was looking in for the sign — with a 1-2 count — when the power failed.

"It went dark right away," Dillmore said. "I looked back and I couldn't see the fans, the catcher or the umpire."

Auxiliary lights came on within a minute, but the stadium never regained full illumination.

Earlier, Schmidt allowed his first run of the spring and insists he has yet to find his rhythm. He gave up a home run to Chad Moeller, snapping an eight-inning scoreless streak.

"There will be a stretch of four pitches where I felt I had it and then all of a sudden I didn't know what I was doing," Schmidt said.

Schmidt allowed two hits and walked three while striking out seven. He's given up four hits and had 11 strikeouts in 10 innings for a spring ERA of 0.9.

Blue Jays 2, Tigers 2 (10): At Lakeland, Fla., Gabe Gross hit his sixth homer and Josh Towers had his best outing of the spring for Toronto.

Gross, who will probably start the season at Triple-A Syracuse because of Toronto's crowded outfield, is batting .500 with 11 RBIs.

Red Sox 6, Devil Rays 5: At St. Petersburg, Fla., Mark Bellhorn hit two RBI doubles and Bronson Arroyo had a solid start for Boston, which snapped a five-game losing streak.

Twins 2, Marlins (5) 2 (11): At Jupiter, Fla., Ismael Valdez allowed two runs in three innings in his spring training debut. Valdez, projected as Florida's No. 5 starter, missed two weeks because of a virus.

Cardinals 5, Orioles 4: At Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Chris Carpenter pitched four shutout innings and St. Louis overcame a poor outing by closer Jason Irsinghausen.

Spring training

Nationals (ss) 4, Indians (ss) 3: At Viera, Fla., Livan Hernandez pitched six innings, allowing one run and three hits, and Cristian Guzman hit a two-run homer to lead Washington.

Mets 7, Indians (ss) 5: At Port St. Lucie, Fla., Carlos Beltran hit his third homer for New York and added a double. Doug Mientkiewicz had two more hits to raise his spring training average to .381. Backup catcher Ramon Castro hit a three-run shot.

Yankees 11, Marlins (ss) 5: At Tampa, Fla., Derek Jeter had three hits and four RBIs to help New York win its fourth straight. Mike Mussina allowed three runs — one earned — and six hits in four innings.

Mariners 11, Athletics 4: At Peoria, Ariz., Jamie Moyer allowed one hit in five innings for Seattle, which roughed up Barry Zito for six runs — four earned — in three innings.

Rangers (ss) 1, Rockies 0 (10): At Surprise, Ariz., Ricardo Rodriguez threw 4 1/3 shutout innings in his third spring start for Texas. Jason Jennings, Colorado's No. 2 starter, pitched four scoreless innings.

Cubs 6, Royals 1: At Mesa, Ariz., Corey Patterson hit a two-run single during a six-run fourth inning against reliever Chris George.

White Sox 8, Angels 5: At Tucson, Ariz., Vladimir Guerrero homered for the Angels, but Jason Kipnis struggled in his spring debut. Making his first appearance because of shoulder soreness, Escobar gave up three runs and six hits in two innings.

Astros 6, Nationals (ss) 5: At Kissimmee, Fla., Houston's Brandon Backe struck out six while allowing three runs in four innings. John Patterson, competing for the fifth spot in Washington's rotation, allowed seven hits and five runs in four innings.

Brewers (ss) 6, Rangers (ss) 4: At Phoenix, outfielder Brad Nelson, sent to the minors earlier in the day, had a three-run, game-tying pinch homer off Ryan Buick in the Brewers' four-run rally in the fourth.

Schilling pessimistic about starting Boston pener

The Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Florida — Curt Schilling said he doesn't think there's a chance he'd start on Opening Day after he threw Wednesday to Red Sox batters in a simulated game.

He threw 63 pitches before Boston's game against the St. Louis Cardinals and said he made progress. But time is running out for the Red Sox have two weeks left in the exhibition season and he hasn't pitched in a game.

Red Sox General Manager

Baseball briefs

Theo Epstein said it would be a surprise if Schilling pitched the opener on April 3 against the Yankees in New York. Manager Terry Francona didn't think it was realistic that he'd pitch then.

"If you do the math, I don't think so," Schilling said, when asked if there's a chance he'll pitch in the opener, "but I haven't sat down and looked at the sched-

ule so, in my mind, I will pitch in the big leagues, hopefully, the day I'm ready to be active if I have to start the season on the disabled list or whatever the scenario is."

The Red Sox have three days off in the first 10 days of the season and wouldn't need a fifth starter for the first two weeks.

Schilling, who underwent surgery last November after pitching in the World Series on a temporarily repaired ankle, said the ankle's not quite back to normal and he expects his next activity to be in a game.

Indians extend Wedge's deal

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — Cleveland signed manager Eric Wedge to a two-year contract extension Wednesday, keeping him in the dugout with the Indians until 2007.

The extension includes a two-year club option through 2009.

"Eric has consistently demonstrated his strengths as a leader on the field and in the clubhouse," general manager Mark Shapiro said.

Wedge, 37, led the youngest team in the American League in 2004 to an 89-82 record. After going 68-94 the previous year, the Indians had five players on the 2004 All-Star team and were within one game of first place in the AL Central on Aug. 15.

Bench coach Buddy Bell, hitting coach Eddie Murray, pitching coach Carl Willis, third-base coach Joel Skinner, first-base coach Jeff Datz, bullpen coach Tim Lincecum and bullpen catcher Dan Williams had their contracts or options extended through 2006.

Norwegian musher Sorlie wins second Iditarod title

BY RACHEL D'ORO
The Associated Press

NOME, Alaska — Norway's Robert Sorlie won the Iditarod on Wednesday, overcoming insomnia and a dwindling dog team for his second win in only three tries.

Sorlie, a 47-year-old freighter, crossed under the arch that serves as the finish line at 8:39 a.m., winning the 1,100-mile race across Alaska in nine days, 18 hours, 39 minutes and 31 seconds.

"It feels good," Sorlie said. "I am ready for breakfast."

Sorlie finished the race with

eight dogs — half the number he started the race with, but the same number that took him to victory two years ago.

Sorlie is a three-time champion of Norway's premier long-distance sled dog race, the 600-mile Finnmarksløpet.

This year's run was only the third time Sorlie had made the 1,100-mile trip from Anchorage to Nome, a total of 3,500 at the edge of the frozen Bering Sea. In his first showing, in 2002, he finished ninth, setting a rookie record. He won the race in 2003.

This time, Sorlie grabbed the

lead early. The owner of a small kennel, he fended off a strong field that included seasoned veterans and five other Iditarod champions.

"I think this win is better than the 2003," he said. "This year, the dogs are better."

Sorlie is the second Iditarod winner born outside the United States and the second person who didn't make their home in Alaska to win. Doug Swingley of Lincoln, Mont., won four times and Martin Buser, a Swiss native who has lived in Alaska more than two decades, became a U.S. citizen after winning

his fourth Iditarod in 2002.

For winning the 33rd Iditarod, Sorlie will receive \$72,000 and a pickup truck. Seventy-nine mushers started this year's race, which has a purse of \$750,000. As of Wednesday morning, 66 mushers were still running.

Ed Iten, racing in his seventh Iditarod, finished second about 35 minutes behind Sorlie. His previous best finish was fifth in 2004.

The 2005 race was marked by unusually warm weather on much of the route, with wet, slushy snow and temperatures that can be uncomfortable for the

dogs, which generally run best when it's 20 degrees below zero to 20 degrees above. A lack of a solid snow base also forced race officials to move the March 6 start from Wasilla to Willow.

Defending champion Mitch Seavey was racing in third place, followed by Ranny Brooks, who was runner-up in 2002 and 2003.

Rookie Bjorn Andersen of Norway, Sorlie's nephew, was running in fifth place.

Legally blind Iditarod rookie Rachel Scodris of Bend, Ore., was at the back of the pack.

Defending champs softball champions

BY RUSTY BRYAN
Stars and Stripes

Defending champions Ramstein and Patch open the high school softball season this weekend with loaded lineups.

Both will have two returning first-team All-European players and a second-teamer in their lineups when they take on nonconference opponents at home.

For two-time defending Division I champion Ramstein, those all-stars are pitcher-shortstop Victoria Apodaca (4-1, 3.33 ERA, 475 batting average), first baseman Heather Steele (.458 BA) and third baseman Mara Groom (.425 BA).

For first-year head coach C.J. Lalau of Division II champion Patch, the All-Europeans are pitcher/catcher Kasye's Lalau (91 strikeouts, .581 BA), second baseman Elisa Nieves (.585 BA) and pitcher-first baseman Lauren Sanchez (.425 BA). Coach Lalau, an assistant last season, replaces Billy Henry, a Marine who was transferred to Guantanamo, Cuba, last summer.

For Kent Grosshuesch, at least, the bout doesn't end with the top three. Grosshuesch says he has three promising freshmen — Kayla Haven, Lisa Domingo and Jessica Apodaca — who are pushing for varsity status.

For the rest of the six Division I schools, the name of the game is catch-up.

This week's prep schedule

(Boys and girls at same sites unless otherwise indicated)

Senior

Nonconference—International School of Brussels at Lakewood; Ramstein at Wiesbaden.

Italy-Aviano at American Overseas School of Rome; Naples at Maymont in Wiesbaden; Rome, Milan at Vicenza; Signella boys at Livorno.

Saturday

Nonconference—Bilburg at Ramstein; Heidelberg at Hünau; Kaiserslautern at Patch; Mannheim at Wiesbaden.

Tennis

Italy-Aviano at American Overseas School of Rome; Naples at Maymont; International of Rome; Milan at Vicenza; Signella at Livorno.



RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

First baseman Morgan Parkerson batted .402 last season for Lakewood, which will try to take down defending Div. I champ Ramstein.

Lakewood, the only school other than Ramstein to have won a European Division I crown, can call on second-team All-European first baseman Morgan Parkerson, who batted .402 last season, and all-conference shortstop Ashley Lariviere. But coach John Gilmore's squad was gutted by graduation and transfers.

Heidelberg's Al Simonic will rely on all-conference pitcher Brittany Clark and first baseman Cassandra Pope, but he lost four-year catcher Carissa Beach.

Returns Kordia Holmes, Megan Puls, Keisha Brooks and Megan Hendrix carry the colors for Juanita Johnson-Archie's Würzburg Lady Wolves. In contrast, Candie Lopez's Wiesbaden Lady Warriors lost its top player when its tourney star, All-European pitcher Melissa Mueller, graduated.

Except for Patch, lineup holes are the story for the other four Division II schools.

Bilburg's Lady Barons, who

saw their string of four straight Division II titles ended by Patch last season, return second-team All-European pitcher Ashley Kazimer (.324, 2.10 ERA). But coach Dan Vasquez has just one infielder returnee, second baseman Olivia Eschborn, after moving third baseman Monica Bitt to catcher.

Division III features just four schools — Division III champ London Central, Alconbury, Baumholder and Giesen — that play a regular season. They are joined at tournament time, by Lajes, Rota and this season, Signella.

All-European first-team shortstop Carly Biscoon, who batted .606 and hit eight home runs last year as a freshman, will anchor Alconbury; catcher Shawntae Pace (.606) will do the same for Baumholder.

Conference play begins March 26, with all teams advancing to the European I, II and III events at Ramstein May 19-21.

E-mail Rusty Bryan at: bryan@mail.stripes.osd.mil

Local scoreboard

U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships

Top finishers in the U.S. Forces Europe Ski and Snowboard Championships, held Saturday and Sunday in Garmisch, Germany:

Snowboard Giant Slalom

1. Nicolina Boretti (Garmisch) 2:28.87; 2. Joyce Ellis (Garmisch) 2:49.76; 3. Jessica Greer (Stuttgart) 2:56.60; 4. Maria Boretti (Garmisch) 3:41.54; 5. Sarah Orsimeo (Hofen) 4:41.11

Boys Combined

1. Stephen Murta (Stuttgart) 2:05.51; 2. Derek Silver (Garmisch) 2:11.91; 3. Justin Ford (Ramstein) 2:14.16; 4. Sean Gifford (Garmisch) 2:16.73; 5. Sean Murta (Stuttgart) 2:21.47

Slalom

1. Julia Goodwin (Garmisch) 1:06.41; 2. Lena Schor (Bamberg) 1:16.05

Boys Slalom

1. Charlie Field (Garmisch) 1:13.80; 2. Jacob Field (Garmisch) 1:15.61; 3. Jankin Lindstrom, 1:50.08

Girls Junior

1. Joyce Ellis (Garmisch) 55.79; 2. Anna Denikewicz (Garmisch) 56.21; 3. Anna Cresler (Hofen) 1:02.15; 4. Anna Walsch (Garmisch) 1:02.51; 5. Diana Belanger (Stuttgart) 1:12.34

Boys Junior

1. Seby Smithback (Garmisch) 50.16; 2. Alex Denikewicz (Garmisch) 51.04; 3. Louis Baker (Garmisch) 54.54; 4. David Boretti (Garmisch) 1:00.31; 5. Anna Walsch (Garmisch) 1:03.23; 5. Meiler Boller (Garmisch) 1:04.22

Girls Senior

1. Katie Allen (Garmisch) 57.78

Boys Senior

1. Phillip Abel (Bamberg) 58.35; 2. Phillip Cresler (Vilgelo) 1:04.31; 3. Joshua Dickson (Garmisch) 1:06.09

Giant Slalom

1. Julia Goodwin (Garmisch) 2:08.32; 2. Sophia Walsch (Garmisch) 2:20.13; 3. Jordan Gie (Garmisch) 2:22.57; 4. Taylor Roberts (Garmisch) 2:22.96; 5. Sophia Cresler (Vilgelo) 2:24.51

Boys Slalom

1. Jacob Field (Garmisch) 2:08.32; 2. Christopher Boretti (Garmisch) 2:10.52; 3. Daniel Konarkat (Garmisch) 2:11.45; 4. Patrick Field (Garmisch) 2:21.28; 5. Nicholas Holzer (Garmisch) 2:21.88

Girls Junior

1. Anna Denikewicz (Garmisch) 1:31.81; 2. Joyce Ellis (Garmisch) 1:38.12; 3. Chelsea Smithback (Garmisch) 1:42.72; 4. Anna Walsch (Garmisch) 1:43.86; 5. Anna Cresler (Vilgelo) 1:55.27

Boys Junior

1. Alex Denikewicz (Garmisch) 1:29.39; 2. Seby Smithback (Garmisch) 1:31.96; 3. Doran Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:33.40; 4. Louis Baker (Garmisch) 1:34.48; 5. Robbie Field (Garmisch) 1:40.83

Girls Senior

1. Kristin Ellis (Garmisch) 1:27.76; 2. Maggie Melzer (Garmisch) 1:31.96; 3. Jennifer Allen (Bamberg) 1:39.27; 4. Lisa Lovell (Bamberg) 1:40.27; 5. Virginia Seiler (Bamberg) 1:42.59

Boys Senior

1. Tim Jensen (Garmisch) 1:30.94; 2. Cory Howe (Garmisch) 1:38.71; 3. Phillip Abel (Bamberg) 1:39.80; 4. Derek Pegin (Garmisch) 1:40.69; 5. Phil Cresler (Vilgelo) 1:56.88

Girls Combined

1. Matthew Bush (Bamberg) 1:47.61; 2. Belen Smithback (Garmisch) 1:48.72; 3. Monnikau (Hofen) 2:16.49; 4. Christopher Boretti (Garmisch) 2:19.57; 5. Shawn Mikoski (Hofen) 2:22.84

Boys Junior

1. Marie Turker (Aviano) 2:06.16; 2. Ariana Eder (Vilgelo) 2:12.24; 3. Lisa Eder (Vilgelo) 2:17.64; 4. Lisa Mabbitt (Stuttgart) 2:19.47; 5. Lisa Eder (Vilgelo) 2:20.75; 6. Brian Eder (Stuttgart) 2:21.60

Girls Junior

1. Simon Rianier (Garmisch) 2:02.21

Men's Military Open

1. Bradley Rawlings (Manheim) 1:47.39; 2. Robert Day (Bamberg) 2:03.73; 3. John Tontochy II (Heidelberg) 2:05.75; 4. Brian Eder (Stuttgart) 2:10.60

Boys Senior

1. Simon Rianier (Garmisch) 2:02.21

Women's Civilian Masters

1. Barbara Howard (Bamberg) 1:25.25; 2. Susan Biegelstein (Hofen) 1:53.63

Men's Military Masters

1. John Robert (Garmisch) 25:13; 2. Robert Fullerton (Katterbach) 26.62; 3. Bryan Schulte (Oberbayern) 1:01:48; 4. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:04:31; 5. Jeffrey Harrigan (Garmisch) 1:06:71

Men's Civilian Masters

1. Larry Boretti (Garmisch) 1:26.42; 2. Gerry Biegelstein (Hofen) 1:26.58; 3. Brian Schulte (Hofen) 1:26.58; 4. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:09:72; 5. John Macarus (Vilgelo) 1:09:72

Women's Civilian Masters

1. Christa Ellis (Garmisch) 1:24.00; 2. Susan Boretti (Garmisch) 1:24.00; 3. Reine Cresler (Garmisch) 1:27.48; 4. Reine Cresler (Garmisch) 1:27.48

Men's Military Senior

1. Gerald Lauscher (Garmisch) 57:31; 2. Brian Eder (Stuttgart) 1:01:35; 3. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:03:25; 4. John Fravel (Garmisch) 1:03:25

Men's Civilian Senior

1. Gerald Lauscher (Garmisch) 1:01:35; 2. Greg Eder (Stuttgart) 1:08:12; 3. Christopher Walsch (Garmisch) 1:08:12; 4. John Fravel (Garmisch) 1:08:12

Women's Military Combined

1. Deborah Smithback (Garmisch) 1:57:57; 2. Becky Eder (Stuttgart) 1:51:57

Women's Open

1. Kristina Davis (Oberbayern) 1:02:01; 2. Andrea Eder (Stuttgart) 1:02:01; 3. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:04:71; 4. Monica Inanone (Heidelberg) 1:05:21; 5. Undine Portner (Garmisch) 1:07:22

Men's Military Open

1. Bradley Peterson (Spangdahlem) 48:86; 2. Chad Roberts 1:04:43; 4. James Allen (Pretor Wiesbaden) 1:06:48; 4. Keith Jones (Stuttgart) 1:06:56; 5. Lance Tressler (Rein-Mann) 1:18:51

Women's Pro Masters

No finishers

Women's Pro Combined

1. Gardner Willgoose (Garmisch) 56:61; 2. Leah Prowman (Garmisch) 1:04:43; 4. James Allen (Reed (Garmisch) 56:71; 4. Jack Smithback (Garmisch) 1:02:09

Other

1. Louis Abel (Bamberg) 50.75

Men's Civilian Masters

1. Shelley Mitchell (Garmisch) 1:46.61; 2. Barbara Howard (Garmisch) 1:59.38; 3. Susan Biegelstein (Hofen) 2:06.56; 4. Cathy Levy (Garmisch) 2:08.87; 5. Tracey Garmisch (Vilgelo) 2:10.87

Men's Military Masters

1. John Robert (Garmisch) 1:03:07; 2. Robert Fullerton (Katterbach) 1:04:04; 3. Jeff Allen (Garmisch) 1:04:43; 4. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:04:56; 5. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:04:56

Men's Civilian Masters

1. Larry Boretti (Garmisch) 1:26.42; 2. Gerry Biegelstein (Hofen) 1:26.58; 3. Brian Schulte (Hofen) 1:26.58; 4. John Logsdon (Bamberg) 1:09:72; 5. John Macarus (Vilgelo) 1:09:72

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Women's Pro Masters

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Other

1. Louis Abel (Bamberg) 50.75

Bubbling over with confidence

In a few weeks, Georgia Tech has transformed itself from disappointment to darling of NCAA tournament

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Isma'il Muhammad was trying to answer a reporter's question, but Will Bynum wouldn't let him.

Sitting nearby, Bynum kept poking fun at his teammate, distracting Muhammad so much that he finally gave up.

"I can't remember what I was trying to say," Muhammad said Tuesday, casting a look of mock disinterest toward Bynum.

Yep, Georgia Tech is loose and feeling pretty good about itself heading into the NCAA tournament just a few weeks after being labeled one of the most disappointing teams in the country.

"You can see we're kind of got our swagger back," Muhammad said. "We played some good basketball at the end of the season."

Suddenly, the Yellow Jackets (19-11) that were touted as a team that could shock some folks in the NCAA tournament. After all, they've still got most of the same cast — Bynum, Muhammad, Jarrett Jack, Luke Schenker, B.J. Elder — that starred in a surprising run to the championship game a year ago.

"We've got some people eating their words now," Muhammad said. "They wrote us off in the middle of the season when B.J. got hurt. Even when he came back, we didn't get right away. But the way we played in the ACC tournament showed we still have some fight left in us."

Georgia Tech, which went nearly two months without winning two games in a row, was on the NCAA bubble heading into the

"You can see we've kind of got our swagger back. We played some good basketball at the end of the season."

Isma'il Muhammad

Georgia Tech forward

final week of the regular season. For a team that began the season ranked third in the country, it was quite a letdown.

But the Yellow Jackets defeated Clemson in their regular-season finale, routed Virginia Tech to start the Atlantic Coast Conference tournament, then pulled off a stunning upset of North Carolina in the semifinals.

Not even a loss to Duke in the ACC championship game hurt the team's morale. The players were relaxed and joking around after Tuesday's practice, pleased to have earned a No. 5 seed with their strong finish.

The Yellow Jackets open the NCAA's Friday against Georgia

Washington in Nashville, Tenn.

"Everybody's got a shot," Bynum said.

"It just takes a little bit of luck and timing. We're playing good at the right time, so we've got the timing part down."

Not that the Yellow Jackets don't have a few problems. Jack is hobbling on a sprained ankle, while Muhammad arrived for his interview session with a big pack of ice taped to his right knee.

Captain Paul Hewitt is confident that Jack — the team's most valuable player — will be ready to go by Friday, but the junior point guard sounds more concerned.

"If I feel like I can't go out there and contribute, I would be doing an injustice to the team by trying to play," he said.

"If I can't play to my normal capabilities, I'll tell coach to sit me down."

Muhammad didn't play at all in the ACC tournament, giving him a chance to rest his ailing knee. He plans to get it checked after the season but is determined to finish his senior year on the court — not the sideline.

"I've got to tough it out," Muhammad said.

"Hopefully we've got three more weeks to go in the season. At this time of year, you just have to play through it. Pain doesn't matter anymore."

The Yellow Jackets won five thrilling games in last year's tournament. The largest margin was an eight-point win over Kansas in the regional final, a game that went into overtime.

"I don't think we played great in any game," Jack said.

"But we just kept getting the job done."

Georgia Tech finally met its



KRT

B.J. Elder (1) ranks second on Georgia Tech with a 13.0-point-per-game average. The Yellow Jackets (19-11), last year's national runner-up, won their regular-season finale and two games in the ACC tournament to break an 11-game streak of alternating wins and losses.

match in the championship game, losing to Connecticut 82-73 after falling behind by as many as 25 in the second half. Ever since, the 19-11 Yellow Jackets have been longing for another chance to win it all.

Bynum even showed up Tuesday wearing a pullover with the 2004 Final Four logo.

"I've got to remind the team.

I've got to remind the media. I've got to remind everybody," he said. "It gives you a little confidence when you're there before."

"But a team like Georgia Washington has never been there. They are hungry. They want to upset us. That drives me more than last year's experience."

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After a brief downer, Wake seeks to rise again

BY AARON BEARD

The Associated Press

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Wake Forest played the entire season under the weight of lofty expectations from fans and its own high hopes.

Now, the Demon Deacons know it's time to live up to those goals.

The team many picked in November to win the national title opens NCAA tournament play Thursday in Cleveland. And the Demon Deacons need to put behind all the distractions of their 26-5 regular-season — from the short-attention-span defense and shaky shooting days to the low blow by their point guard that might have cost them a No. 1 seed.

Anything less than the Demon Deacons' usual high-scoring form could result in a disappointing end to what has been a successful season.

"If we want people to take more about us, we're going to have to earn it and win games in the tournament," junior Justin Gray said Tuesday.

Heading into a game against 15th-seeded Chattanooga, Wake Forest has a chance to set a school record for wins in a season. A victory would also give the Demon Deacons at least one win in each of their past four NCAA appearances.

But this group is looking for much more.

The Demon Deacons reached the round of 16 last year, then returned every scholarship player to get the stage for the highest expectations in program history. They started the season ranked second, and even reached No. 1 in the polls for the first time.

Their 13 Atlantic Coast Conference wins tied a school record and gave them a second-place finish in the highly competitive league.

"I think our mind-set is very focused and, at the same time, very excited to play," junior Eric Williams said. "This had been a long time coming for us. We really couldn't wait to get to the tournament — not to overlook what we did during the season."

The question is whether the Demon Deacons are prepared for the pressure that will come with trying to reach only their second Final Four in school history — and whether they have put a tumultuous week behind them.

Less than two weeks ago, Wake Forest looked like a strong possibility for a No. 1 seed in the tournament. The Demon Deacons had played a tough nonconference schedule that included NCAA participants Georgia Washington, Arizona, Tennessee, Texas and New Mexico to complement an ACC résumé that included wins against Duke and North Carolina.

But things changed in a 55-53 victory at North Carolina State in the season finale. Chris Paul hit a game-winning shot in the final second but was suspended for one game for hitting Julius Hodge in the groin.

That meant Paul was in street clothes when the Wolfpack and Demon Deacons met again Friday in the ACC tournament quarterfinals.

An inspired North Carolina State won 81-65.

Coach Skip Prosser said his team played tentatively in that game, possibly a result of the tense vibe between the clubs. He hopes his team has moved past that and closer to the aggressive, free-wheeling style that made it so tough throughout the season.

Prosser said the team practiced with "great emotion" Monday, which he hopes means the players will react well to the pressure of playing as a high seed.

"We talk about being risk takers in the post-season, and so many teams have tendency to play things close to the vest and play not to lose [NCAA] games," Prosser said. "The safest place for the ship is at the dock, but that's not what the ship's built for."

We told them, 'We'll keep this real simple in the postseason. I want you to guard, rebound and play with emotion.' I want them to understand how special this is. You never know when you'll go back to the tournament."

A novel season nets rave reviews

Hawkeyes finish strong after dismissing their top scorer

By C. TRENT ROSECRANS
Cincinnati Post

His team lost, but Iowa basketball coach Steve Alford knew things would be OK following the Hawkeyes' 75-64 loss to Michigan State on Feb. 5.

Just three days after kicking his leading scorer, Pierce Pierce, off the team, the Hawkeyes came back from a 22-point deficit in the second half to get within three points with a minute left.

"We didn't give up," Alford said about that game. "That solidified it in our minds that we were going to respond the right way."

Iowa didn't win, but it was the way his team responded that gave the former Indiana point guard hope his team could overcome a soap-opera season and advance to where they are now, preparing for the first round of the NCAA tournament against Cincinnati on Thursday at Indianapolis.

Pierce, who led the Hawkeyes with 17.8 points per game, was dismissed from the team on Feb. 2 after an incident involving an ex-girlfriend at an Iowa City apartment complex on Jan. 27. Pierce pled not guilty to three felony charges and a misdemeanor on March 1.

A trial for the two counts of first-degree burglary and one count of assault with intent to commit sexual assault, as well as the misdemeanor count of fourth-degree criminal mischief, will likely begin in mid-May.

When dismissing Pierce, Alford said his star didn't take advantage of his second chance. Pierce was charged with third-degree sexual assault in 2002. He pleaded guilty to a lesser charge.

Despite what Alford felt was a positive response against the Spartans, the Hawkeyes lost five of their next six following Pierce's dismissal. Four of those five were against teams in the NCAA tournament — Michigan State, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota.

"I thought playing those teams, even though they were losses, they proved to themselves things would be OK," Alford said.

The biggest surprise was that even after losing a player the caliber of Pierce, the Hawkeyes didn't change much schematically. The Hawkeyes are



Iowa basketball coach Steve Alford encourages his players after the Hawkeyes' victory last week over Michigan State in the Big Ten tournament, a result that gave an enormous boost to Iowa's NCAA hopes.

doing pretty much the same things they did with Pierce, only with Mike Henderson in the starting lineup instead.

The scoring load has shifted from Pierce to sophomore guard Adam Haluska. The Iowa State transfer is averaging 17.4 points a game since Pierce was dismissed. He was averaging 12.4 points before that.

Junior forward Greg Brunner has averaged 15.5 points per game following Pierce's dismissal and junior point guard Jeff Horner is averaging 15 points per game in the past 12.

"We had every reason to coast, but I've got to give credit to our guys," Alford said.

The key game for the turnaround, according to Alford, was a 78-56 victory at Penn State on Feb. 26.

"It may sound too simple, but it gave us a lot of confidence," Alford said. Amid talk of Alford's job security, the win at Penn State was the start of a five-game winning streak that led the Hawkeyes from NIT preparations to the NCAA tournament bubble and the Big Ten tournament semifinals, where they fell to Wisconsin on a last-second shot.

It put the Hawkeyes in position to make the NCAA tournament, yet there were plenty of doubts as the team sat through the selection show on Sunday.

When Iowa was finally announced on the final bracket that was unveiled there was so much celebration that there was little regard to whom the Hawkeyes would face and where they'd play.

"When all's said and done, it's how you handle things," Alford said. "In coaching, I learned from the players, there are good times, bad times and ugly times. If you're steadfast in what you believe in all three times, you'll be successful."

Iowa is in a state of hoops euphoria

By CHUCK SCHOFFNER
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — What a week to be a basketball fan in Iowa.

Iowa State, Iowa and Northern Iowa are getting ready to play in the men's NCAA tournament, the Iowa State women are in the NCAAAs and the boys' high school tournament is under way in Des Moines.

"Being a product of the state of Iowa, a product of Iowa high school basketball, to have it happen in the week of the boys' tournament, I can't imagine more excitement in the state of Iowa over basketball than there is today," Northern Iowa coach Greg McDermott said Monday.

Iowa (21-11) gets things started on Thursday afternoon against Cincinnati (24-7) in Indianapolis. Iowa State (18-11) plays Minnesota (21-10) on Friday afternoon in Charlotte, N.C., and Northern Iowa (21-10) takes on Wisconsin on Friday night in Oklahoma City.

Obviously, it's terrific for the state's Iowa coach Steve Alford said. "Iowa State has had a great run. Northern Iowa has been solid all year. We had to play in both of those teams in the last four games in our building, so we have a lot of respect for both of those programs."

In the women's tournament, Iowa State (23-6) plays Utah (25-7) in Fresno, Calif., on Saturday night.

This is the first time the state has put three teams in the men's NCAA tournament. All three got in at at-large selections, which is especially noteworthy for Northern Iowa.

The Panthers had to win their

conference tournament to earn their two previous NCAA berths — last year and in 1990.

"It's somewhat unbelievable," said McDermott, who grew up in Cascade. "It's one thing to win a conference tournament. But when you think about the number of teams competing for those few at-large bids, it's hard to do. For us to be standing here as an at-large recipient, it's phenomenal."

McDermott thanked the two other state schools for helping make that happen. Iowa and Iowa State play Northern Iowa every year and that strengthens the Panthers' schedule. A game at Cincinnati early in the season also helped UNI's résumé.

"We owe a debt of gratitude for Iowa State and Iowa," McDermott said. "Without their willingness to play us, we would not have a leg to stand on in competing for at-large bids."

It will be the first NCAA tournament for all the Iowa and Iowa State players. Both schools last played in the tournament in 2001.

"My goal, since I was a little kid, was to get to the point we're at right now," Iowa's Greg Brunner said.

Iowa State made the field in its second season under coach Wayne Morgan, who picked up the pieces from Larry Eustachy's messy departure in 2003. Morgan said he was confident this would happen.

"I don't know if I saw us in the NCAA two years later, but I saw us in the NCAA as we built the team," he said. "Our objective now is to get to the point where we take it almost for granted and get to the point where we can try to compete to win the thing."

Identity: Do you know me now?

IDENTITY, FROM BACK PAGE

Off the court, Coppentrath is an unassuming personality from a small Vermont town. When an elementary school student asked him to speak to his class, Coppentrath said yes. Then the child called him the day of the speech and said he couldn't come because his father, who was supposed to drive him, had to work. So Coppentrath picked up the boy at his house and drove him there.

Fazekas, a 6-11 sophomore, was the WAC Player of the Year, averaging 21.8 points and 10.7 rebounds. Basketball junkies got a glimpse of how good he is when Nevada beat Vermont and Coppentrath in a Bracket Busters matchup.

His nose was broken in the regular season finale at San Jose State and he'll continue to wear a protective mask in NCAA play.

"The mask is no big deal. I don't even know it is on my face anymore," Fazekas said.

Mendez is the top-scoring Canadian-born player in Division I history, passing the likes of NBA star Steve Nash. The Spanish-speaking native of Montreal, the MAAC player of the year, is the only player this season to rank in the top 10 in both scoring (23.6) and rebounding (10.5) in Division I.

In the MAAC championship game, Mendez,

scored 27 points and added 13 rebounds and earned tournament MVP honors.

"He'd start for anybody in our conference (the Big 12)," said Oklahoma coach Kelvin Sampson, whose Sooners drew Niagara in the opening round.

While playing for the Canadian National Team last summer, Mendez, who's 6-8, 245, went up against Yao Ming, the 7-6 Chinese star and Houston Rocket.

"He says he did OK," said Niagara coach Joe Mihalich. Loughton and Turiaf also are foreign born. Loughton is from Perth, Australia, and Turiaf from Martinique.

Loughton, a 6-9 junior was the Colonial Athletic Association Player of the Year and averages 13.9 points and 8.1 rebounds. He had an impressive game in Old Dominion's overtime win over Virginia Commonwealth in the conference tournament championship game.

He's a throwback player, somebody who compensates for his lack of quickness with fundamental skills any coach would pass along to a clinic audience.

Turiaf, a 6-10, 249-pound senior, has a full beard and imposes himself on his opponents. Despite ankle problems, the West Coast Conference Player of the Year averages 16.1 points and 9.3 rebounds and blocks two shots per game.



Johnny Mathies was the driving force in Creighton's Missouri Valley Conference tournament championship run, earning MVP honors.

All these mystery men have basketball pedigrees that few fans know about. That could change this weekend.



Vernmont's Taylor Coppentrath is a three-time conference player of the year who has NBA-type talent.

Men's NCAA tournament

OPENING ROUND

Tuesday, March 15
Oakland, Mich. vs. Alabama (A&M 69)
SYRACUSE REGIONAL
First Round
Friday, March 18
Charlotte (21-7) vs. North Carolina State (13-13)
Connecticut (22-7) vs. Central Florida (24-8)
Minnesota (21-10) vs. Iowa State (18-11)
North Carolina (27-4) vs. Oakland, Mich. (12-18)
Florida (23-7) vs. Ohio (21-10)
Wisconsin (22-7) vs. New Mexico (26-6)
Wisconsin (22-4) vs. Northern Iowa (21-10)
Kansas (23-6) vs. Bucknell (22-9)

Second Round

Sunday, March 20
Connecticut/Central Florida vs. Charlotte/North Carolina
North Carolina/Oakland, Mich. vs. Minnesota/Iowa State
Florida/Ohio vs. Villanova/New Mexico
Kansas/Bucknell vs. Wisconsin/Northern Iowa

Semifinals

Friday, March 25
North Carolina/Oakland, Mich. — Minnesota/Iowa State winner vs. Florida/Ohio — Villanova/New Mexico
Connecticut/Central Florida — Charlotte/North Carolina winner vs. Kansas/Bucknell — Wisconsin/Northern Iowa

Saturday, March 27

Championship
CHICAGO REGIONAL
First Round
Thursday, March 17
Alabama (24-7) vs. Wisconsin-Milwaukee (24-5)

Duke/Connecticut (24-4) vs. Pennsylvania State (25-8)
Texas (26-10) vs. Nevada (24-6)
Illinois (32-1) vs. Fairleigh Dickinson (25-9)
Arizona (24-7) vs. Utah State (24-7)
Louisiana State (26-9) vs. Alabama-Birmingham (21-10)

Friday, March 18

Oakland State (24-6) vs. Southeastern Louisiana (24-6)
Southern Illinois (26-7) vs. Saint Mary's, Calif. (25-6)

Second Round

Saturday, March 19
Boston College/Pennsylvania vs. Alabama-Birmingham
Illinois/Fairleigh Dickinson vs. Texas/Nevada
Arizona/Utah State vs. LSU/Alabama-Birmingham

Sunday, March 20

Oklahoma State/Southern Louisiana vs. Southern Illinois/Saint Mary's, Calif.

Semifinals

Thursday, March 24
Illinois/Fairleigh Dickinson vs. Texas/Nevada vs. Boston College/Pennsylvania — Alabama-Birmingham
Oklahoma State/Southern Louisiana — Southern Illinois/Saint Mary's, Calif.
Arizona/Utah State — LSU/Alabama-Birmingham

Saturday, March 26

Championship
AUSTIN REGIONAL
First Round
Thursday, March 17
Kentucky (25-5) vs. Eastern Kentucky (22-8)
Kennesaw (24-7) vs. Iowa (21-11)
Oklahoma (24-7) vs. Niagara (20-9)
Utah (21-5) vs. Texas-EU (24-7)

Friday, March 18

Syracuse (27-6) vs. Vermont (24-6)
Michigan State (22-6) vs. Old Dominion (24-6)
Duke (25-5) vs. Delaware State (19-13)
Texas Tech (19-13) vs. Mississippi State (22-10)

Second Round

Saturday, March 19
Kentucky/Eastern Kentucky vs. Cincinnati/Iowa

At The McKale Center

Tucson, Ariz.
Oklahoma/Niagara vs. UTAH/Texas-EU Paso
Syracuse/Vermont vs. Michigan State/Old Dominion
Duke/Delaware State vs. Stanford/Mississippi State

Semifinals

Friday, March 25
Duke/Delaware State — Stanford/Mississippi State vs. Syracuse/Vermont — Michigan State/Old Dominion winner
Kentucky/Eastern Kentucky — Cincinnati/Niagara — UTAH/Texas-EU Paso

Saturday, March 27

Championship
ALBUQUERQUE REGIONAL
First Round
Thursday, March 17
Wake Forest (26-5) vs. Chattanooga (24-6)

West Virginia (21-10) vs. Creighton (22-10)
Pacific (22-5) vs. Pittsburgh (20-9)
Washington (27-4) vs. Montana (18-12)
Gonzaga (24-5) vs. Winthrop (22-7)
Texas Tech (20-10) vs. UCLA (18-10)

Friday, March 18

Louisville (25-4) vs. Louisiana-Lafayette (22-7)
Georgia Tech (19-11) vs. George Washington (22-7)

Second Round

Saturday, March 19
Wake Forest/Chattanooga vs. West Virginia/Pittsburgh
Washington/Montana vs. Pacific/Pittsburgh

Gonzaga/Winthrop vs. Texas Tech/UCLA
Sunday, March 20
Southern Illinois vs. Georgia Tech vs. Georgia Tech/George Washington

Semifinals

Thursday, March 24
Washington/Montana vs. Pacific/Pittsburgh vs. Louisville/Louisiana-Lafayette — Georgia Tech/George Washington
Wake Forest/Chattanooga — West Virginia/Pittsburgh
Gonzaga/Winthrop vs. Texas Tech/UCLA

Saturday, March 26

Championship
FINAL FOUR
Sunday, April 3
Chicago Regional champion vs. Albuquerque Regional champion
National championship vs. Austin Regional champion

Monday, April 4

Championship

Oakland continues surge — for now

Golden Grizzlies win play-in, earn right to face top-seeded Tar Heels

BY RUSTY MILLER

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Oakland can still finish the season with a winning record.

All the 13-18 Golden Grizzlies have to do is best top-seeded North Carolina on the Tar Heels' home court, and then pull off another five upsets during the next three weeks.

"If we win the national championship, we'll finally get to 19-18," coach Greg Kampe said with a laugh.

The Golden Grizzlies took the first step Tuesday night at the University of Dayton, beating Alabama A&M 79-69 in the NCAA opening-round game behind Rawle Marshall's 29 points and Courtney Scott's 21.

Oakland (13-18) was its sixth straight, including three upsets in as many days last week by a combined seven points to take the Mid-Continent Conference title and earn a berth in the field of 65.

"There was a whole lot of adversity during the season," said Brandon Cassie, who added 13 points. "It brought us together. That's why we've played so well in these do-or-die games."

The turnaround is almost incomprehensible for a team that was 7-18 and riding a three-game skid 18 days earlier. Almost as incredible, Oakland opened the season 0-7, losing by an average of 13 points a game, against Illinois, Marquette, Xavier, Missouri, Texas A&M, Kansas State and Saint Louis.

The Golden Grizzlies became only the fifth team with a losing record to win an NCAA tournament game, joining Florida A&M (2004), UNC-Asheville (2003) and Siena (2002) — all at Dayton — and Bradley (1955).

Obie Trotter scored 24 points and Joseph Martin added 22 for Alabama A&M (18-14), the Southwestern Athletic Conference regular-season and tournament champion.

A&M coach L. Vann Pettaway said his team was worn out from playing four games in six days, winning the conference tournament Sunday before hitting the road less than 24 hours later to make it to Dayton.

"We want to get back to the big dance, but we want to dance when we're rested," he said. Both teams were making their first appearance in the NCAA tournament. Oakland made the jump from Division II to Division I in the 1997-98 season.

As the Golden Grizzlies stretched the lead to 21 points with 5 minutes left, the emboldened Oakland student section began chanting, "We want Tar Heels! We want Tar Heels!"

"This is surreal," Cassie said. "I can't believe it's all happening."

Marshall, a wiry 6-foot-7 senior swingman expected to be taken in the NBA Draft this spring, had nine rebounds and three assists.

His most dramatic play came in the opening half when he took a pass on the right elbow, pump-faked a defender off his feet and then sliced through the lane for a soaring dunk and foul. A crowd of 8,254 roared its approval.

The Golden Grizzlies closed 38-35 of the break, Oakland scored 16 of the first 18 points in the second half.



Oakland's Rawle Marshall (1) bumps chests with Pierre Dukes (3) during the NCAA opening-round game with Alabama A&M at Tuesday in Dayton, Ohio. Marshall led Oakland to a 79-69 win with 29 points.

Temple knocked out in Chaney's return

The Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. — John Chaney was more amused by his welcome back to Cassell Coliseum than by anything he saw once the game started.

Making his return from a three-week suspension that has left his future uncertain, the Temple coach had an easier night than his team, which lost 60-50 to Virginia Tech in the first round of the NIT on Tuesday night.

"Wherever I go, I'm a lightning rod," Chaney said, smiling as he talked of being asked for autographs and booed by fans at Virginia Tech, a former Atlantic 10 rival of Chaney's Owls.

Zabian Dowdell scored 12 of his 16 points in the second half, six in a game-tied 8-0 run, and Virginia Tech cascaded to victory in its first postseason game in nine years, leaving Chaney disgusted with his team.

"We don't shoot the ball consistently and we haven't a year," said the 73-year-old Hall of Famer said.

"Our big guys cannot score if you sat them on top of the basket.

Men's NIT

We put them in and they don't rebound, either."

Talking basketball, Chaney was passionate. Asked about his future, his famous sunken eyes widened, and he quickly closed the conversation.

"I think I hear my mother calling me," he said when asked.

"I'll be leaving you now if you have no more questions [about] my kids. That's the only reason I'm here — to talk about the team and the game."

Temple athletic director Bill Bradshaw said Monday that he, Chaney and others will get together once the season is over to talk about the future.

The subject of the game was no bargain either for the Owls (16-14), who were trying to give their coach his 500th victory at Temple, but led only until Virginia Tech sent a few free-pointers to fall in the first half.

Then the Hokies (16-13) gave the crowd of 7,416 plenty to cele-



Tuesday's loss was John Chaney's first game following a three-week suspension for sending in a player to commit hard fouls that left Saint Joseph's senior John Bryant with a broken arm.

brate.

"We just had to feel our way through the zone and a couple of guys stepped up," said Dowdell, who finished 3-for-9 on three-pointers.

Second-year coach Seth Green-

berg made sure his team knew of the Hokies' 1973 and 1995 NIT championships, and they seemed intent on adding to it.

"This is an opportunity. You don't build a championship program overnight. It's a process, and this is part of the process," he said.

The win was Virginia Tech's first against Temple in 10 tries. It was the fourth straight year Temple (16-14) has played in the NIT.

Holy Cross 78, Notre Dame 73: At South Bend, Ind., Kevin Hamilton scored a career-high 26 points, 11 during a 23-5 run in the Crusaders' (25-6) victory over the Fighting Irish (17-12).

South Carolina 69, Miami 67: At Columbia, S.C., Josh Gomer's driving basket with 2.1 seconds remaining lifted the Gamecocks (16-13) over the Hurricanes (16-13).

DePaul 75, Missouri 70: At Columbia, Mo., Drake Diener scored a career-high 30 points and tied his career best with seven three-pointers as the Blue Demons (20-10) defeated the Tigers (16-17).

Penn wants to enjoy experience

BY TIM PANACCIO

The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — Penn sophomore Steve Danley says he can appreciate how much Thursday's first-round NCAA tournament game against Boston College means to senior Tim Begley.

It has been more than a decade since Penn last won an NCAA tournament game. Begley was 11 when Penn defeated Nebraska, 90-80, in 1994.

Danley, a 6-foot-8 forward, understands that no senior wants to leave school without a tournament victory.

That's why Thursday's game in Cleveland is a big deal. Boston College is the fourth seed, Penn 13th in the Chicago Round.

"Maybe I am a little bit more aware of it than most guys," Danley said. "My senior year at DeMatha [High School] was a big disappointment. We were one of the worst teams in DeMatha history and had a losing record for the first time in 30 years."

"It kind of makes me look at our guys at Penn. I saw the frustration with Jeff Schiffer and Adam Chubb last year when we didn't make the NAAs. At the same time, you see the joy on [Begley's] face going out there during Senior Night here. This game is the biggest thing in the world for some of these guys because they may not get to do this again."

Penn (20-8) last participated in the tournament in 2003. Begley is the lone Quakers starter who played in a loss to Oklahoma State that season.

"You look at it as your last time around, and maybe it is a little more meaningful," Begley said. "Anytime you go to the NAAs, pretty much the whole country is watching. It's a lot more meaningful than any game you play all season. You treat it differently, prepare differently, and realize the impact any game can have."

Begley, a 6-8 guard, said he remembers how close the Quakers were in the loss to Oklahoma State (77-63) and also in 2002, when they fell, 82-75, to California.

Because so many Penn players weren't around two years ago, there is virtually nothing for this year's team to draw upon in terms of playoff experience. Boston College (24-4) is making its fourth tournament appearance in five years. The Eagles are a veteran team.

"Against Oklahoma State, we were down two or three points late in the game," Begley said. "In a game like that, you want to hang around and give yourself a shot down the stretch. If we can make shots early against BC, get our confidence going, get off to a good start, we could be in good shape."

Boston College has been a bit of an enigma. The Eagles ripped off a school-record 20 straight victories to start the season while ascending to No. 3 in the polls. But they fell back to earth, and finished the season losing three of their last five games. In the Quakers' eyes, the Eagles' recent slump inspires thoughts of an upset.

"Them losing the last few

games kind of hurts us more than anything because they will be all fired up," Begley said.

The Eagles have a height advantage. Junior forward Craig Smith and sophomore forward Jared Dudley are both 6-7. Senior center Nate Doornekamp is a 7-footer.

Which is why the Quakers are going to need Eric Osmundson healthy. The 6-5 senior guard has been bothered for two weeks by a virus that caused him to lose 10 pounds. Osmundson, down to 190,

practiced on Tuesday.

Begley said he has talked to Penn's younger players about what to expect in Cleveland and about enjoying the moment.

"This is a chance of a lifetime for guys like myself," Begley said. "We are not going to be playing in the NBA for 10 years. So all this media coverage is pretty cool for us. I hope our guys get to enjoy because it is a different experience, something different than they will ever have."



Penn's Mark Zoller (24) has a shot blocked by Princeton's Luke Owings during the first half on March 8. The 13th-seeded Quakers are hoping to end an 11-year victory drought in the NCAA tournament when they play No. 4 seed Boston College in the first round on Thursday in Cleveland.

AP

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SPORTS

Creating an identity

Unknowns can make name for themselves in NCAA

BY JOHN ROWE

The Record (Bergen County, N.J.)

Chances are you haven't heard of Johnny Mathies. No, he isn't the singer who spells his name without the "e."

Mathies is a 6-foot guard at Creighton, one of many NCAA tournament players who until now have been household names only in their own households. That could change before this weekend is over.

The playing field is finally somewhat level for the Mathieses of college basketball. J.J. Redick of Duke and Chris Paul of Wake Forest are no longer images on a television screen. They are opponents.

Could there be another Mouse McCadden, the dynamic Cleveland State guard of the mid-1980s, or Bryce Drew of Valparaiso, who made a game-winning three-pointer in 1998, in this tournament's group of quality but virtually unknown players?

There are plenty of candidates from which to choose. From guards such as Mathies, Ed McCants of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Tim Begley of Penn, to big men like Taylor Coppenrath of Vermont, Nick Fazekas of Nevada, Juan Mendez of Niagara, Alex Loughton of Old Dominion and Ronny Turiaf of Gonzaga.

Mathies has underdog written all over him. Despite his size, the junior speedster from Louisville, Ky., is a shooting guard.

After one season at Dixie Junior College in Utah, Mathies joined Creighton in 2003-04, averaging 7.8 points and 1.8 assists. This season he's improved to 11.6 points and 2.2 assists for a team that makes nine three-pointers per game.

Mathies came up big in the Missouri Valley tournament, being selected MVP even though he didn't make any all-conference team.

With a junior-college background, McCants, a 6-3 senior, has a shooter's mentality. He averages 17.4 points and scored a career-high 38 against Detroit and

makes 37 percent of his three-point tries. He hit four threes in the Horizon League championship game.

Begley, the Ivy League Player of the Year, is a big guard (6-6), with an outside game. He is averaging 13.7 points, 5.4 rebounds and 4.8 assists a game. He can be a defensive nightmare for a team with a small backcourt.

Coppenrath is the three-time America East Player of the Year who has helped the Catamounts advance to three straight NCAA tournaments. At 6-9, 257 pounds, he has an NBA-like body and a game that has some scouts comparing him to Dirk Nowitzki. He's averaging 25.7 points and 8.9 rebounds and shooting 53.6 percent from the field.

Last year, Connecticut's Emeka Okafor helped limit Coppenrath, the nation's third-leading scorer at 24.7 points per game, to 12 points in 3-for-17 shooting.

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Wisconsin-Milwaukee guard Ed McCants averages 17.4 points a game and hits 37 percent of his three-point attempts.



Niagara's 6-8 Juan Mendez is the only player in Division I in the top 10 in both scoring (23.6) and rebounding (10.5) average this season.



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Oakland plays on after beating Alabama A&M

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Paul, Wake still reaching for lofty goals

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Adversity no hindrance for Hawkeyes

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Ramstein, Patch return load of talent in softball Page 42

